

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historical Area Report



## Fort Clatsop National Memorial SUGGESTED HISTORICAL AREA REPORT

**John A. Hussey**  
Regional Historian

**April 10, 1957**

National Park Service  
Region Four  
San Francisco, California

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

focl/hussey2/index.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

### COVER

### INTRODUCTION

### I. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SITE

- A. Name, location, and brief description
- B. Synopsis of the history of the site
- C. Identification of the site
- D. Historical narrative and bibliography

### II. MAPS (omitted from on-line edition)

### III. PHOTOGRAPHS (omitted from on-line edition)

### IV. PARK DATA

- A. Ownership of site
  - 1. Present historic site property
  - 2. Land needed to protect site
- B. Appraised value
  - 1. Present historic site property
  - 2. Land needed to protect site
- C. Condition and previous development
- D. Care
  - 1. Past
  - 2. Present
  - 3. Future
- E. Accessibility
- F. Possibility of preservation
- G. Relationship to areas already in National Park System
- H. Sponsors of the project
- I. Persons consulted during the field study

### V. CONFIDENTIAL DATA (omitted from on-line edition)

### APPENDIX (omitted from on-line edition)

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/contents.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



## INTRODUCTION

---

Public Law 590, 84th Congress, approved June 18, 1956, authorized and directed the Secretary of the Interior to investigate and report to the Congress as to the advisability of establishing Fort Clatsop, Oregon, as a national monument. The present report is a result of that authorization.

The full text of the Act is as follows:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Interior is authorized and directed to make a full and complete investigation of the advisability of establishing Fort Clatsop, located in Clatsop County, Oregon, as a national monument.

SEC. 2. As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall report to the Congress the results of such investigation and study made by him under the first section of this Act, together with such recommendations as he deems appropriate. Such report shall contain specific findings with respect to (1) the national historical importance of the proposed memorial, (2) the size, present status and condition of Fort Clatsop, and (3) the estimated total cost of establishing such memorial.

Approved June 18, 1956

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/intro.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



## I. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SITE

---

### **A. Name, location, and brief description**

Apparently there is no official or established name for the site which is the subject of this report. The area is generally referred to as "Fort Clatsop" or "Site of Old Fort Clatsop." A more convenient designation and one frequently used is "Fort Clatsop Site."

The site is located in Clatsop County, Oregon, near the mouth of the Columbia River. More specifically, it is situated on the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River, 1.8 miles south of its mouth. The site is about 4.5 airline miles southwest of the City of Astoria. The shore of the Pacific Ocean lies 3.5 miles directly west.

The property which has been suggested as a possible national monument consists of three contiguous tracts of publicly or semi-publicly owned land, totaling about 6.7 acres in gross area. The ownerships and areas of these tracts are as follows: 1. Oregon Historical Society, 4.9 acres; 2. Clatsop County, .9 acre; 3. Clatsop County Historical Society, .9 acre. A county road right of way, about .8 acre in extent, traverses the Oregon Historical Society property, thus reducing the area available for historic site purposes to a net of about 5.9 acres.

About three acres of this property form a fairly level plateau about 30 to 35 feet above sea level. The remainder of the area consists largely of rather steeply sloping land which drops away to the swamp adjoining the Lewis and Clark River. Except where the land has been cleared for a parking lot, the area is covered by a fairly dense stand of second-growth forest, composed largely of spruce and alder. The level portion of the property has been kept clear of brush, but the sloping sections are marked by heavy undergrowth.

The property is operated as a historic monument by the Oregon Historical Society, acting in cooperation with the Clatsop County Historical Society. The principal existing improvements consist of an approach road from the county highway which runs through the property, a graveled parking lot, a bronze historical marker, and a full-scale replica of the original log Fort Clatsop. Other facilities include a well, pump, drinking fountain, two pit toilets, and several picnic tables.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



## I. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SITE (continued)

### **B. Synopsis of the history of the site**

President Thomas Jefferson's instructions to Meriwether Lewis and William Clark required them to "explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as . . . may offer the most direct . . . communication across this continent." The explorers considered their mission completed when, on a bleak November day in 1805, they saw the broad tidal estuary of the Columbia River from a point on the north bank a short distance above Grays Bay. After visiting the seashore, they crossed to the south side of the Columbia to seek a winter campsite which would be more sheltered from the ocean winds and more abundantly supplied with game. A suitable location was found on the first high ground encountered above the mouth of the present Lewis and Clark River. Here, on December 7, a camp was made.

A small log fort, 50 feet square, was erected and named "Fort Clatsop." The men moved into it on Christmas Day. While waiting here for the coming of spring, they explored the surrounding country, and a detachment was sent to the seacoast to make salt. Lewis and Clark here rewrote their journals and drew several of the maps which were among the most important products of the expedition. On March 23, 1806, the fort was abandoned, and the homeward journey to St. Louis was commenced.

According to tradition, Fort Clatsop was given by Lewis and Clark to a Clatsop Indian chief, by whom it was occupied sporadically until it fell into ruin. Beginning with the arrival of the Astorians on the Columbia in 1811, the site of Fort Clatsop was an object of interest to travelers, and as late as the 1860's it was occasionally visited by sight-seers. The site was included in a donation land claim during the 1850's, and the remains of the post were obliterated by farming operations.

Between 1899 and 1901 there was a renewed interest in the site on the part of historians, and at least two independent attempts were made to establish the exact location. The memories of early settlers in the region formed the basis of these identifications, which were in agreement and which have won general acceptance. The property on which this site stands was acquired by the Oregon Historical Society in 1901, and it has since been operated as a historic monument open to the public.

That the Lewis and Clark Expedition was a dramatic event of far-reaching importance in the history of the United States is well established, although historians do not agree as to the precise extent of the results. Perhaps Bernard DeVoto summed the matter up best when he wrote: "History is not so divisible as to permit us to say exactly how important the Lewis and Clark expedition was in securing Oregon. . . but it gave not only Oregon but the entire West to the American people as something with which the mind could deal."

---

[\*\*<<< Previous\*\*](#)

[\*\*<<< Contents >>>\*\*](#)

[\*\*Next >>>\*\*](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section1b.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



## I. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SITE (continued)

### C. Identification of the site

Summary of conclusions. The identification of the exact site of Fort Clatsop is not based upon documentary evidence contemporaneous with Lewis and Clark's visit to the region nor is it based upon physical remains of the original Fort Clatsop. To date, no physical remains which can be linked definitely with the Lewis and Clark Expedition have been found at the site. Rather, the identification is based upon tradition and upon reminiscences of persons who years earlier had the traditional site pointed out to them.

Nevertheless, the property owned by the Oregon Historical Society in all probability does contain the actual site of Fort Clatsop. This conclusion is based upon the general "tone of credibility" of the reminiscences and their general correspondence with known historical facts, and also upon the fact that certain details of the reminiscences correspond with details given in the Lewis and Clark manuscripts which were unknown to any historians at the time the reminiscences were recorded.

The Lewis and Clark records. The journals and maps made by members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition contain much information which enables one to determine fairly easily the general location of Fort Clatsop. Without any difficulty whatsoever, one learns from the surviving journals that the winter encampment was situated on the west bank of the Netul River (now the Lewis and Clark River) about 2 or 3 miles above its mouth. The site was on the first high ground encountered as the party ascended the river. It was about 30 feet above high tide level and was about 200 yards back from the river near a spring and in a dense stand of "pine" and "balsam fir." The Netul River was about 100 yards wide opposite the camp, and "just above" the spot where the party landed was a "small branch." There were "extensive marshes" at the place of encampment. [1]

Fort Clatsop is indicated on three of the excellent maps drawn by William Clark (see Maps 4, 5 and 6); and the general vicinity of the fort is pictured in considerable detail on a fourth (Map 7). As do the journals, these maps give a clear idea of the general location of the winter camp, but analyze them as one will, one cannot bring them into exact conformity with present-day topographic maps or, for that matter, with each other. About all one can safely conclude from these maps is that Fort Clatsop was located on the west bank of the Netul River, about 2 or 3 miles above its mouth.

The latitude of Fort Clatsop was estimated by the explorers to be 46° 4' 31.3". [2] Evidently they did not record an estimate of the longitude. This calculation obviously was in error, since the correct figure for the present site is about 46° 8' 40". With such a wide margin of error, it is clear that even if a correction factor were determined for the explorers' observations, their figure could not be of real assistance in pinpointing the exact location of the original fort.



When the information contained in the Lewis and Clark records is compared with conditions in the field, it is not too difficult to identify the general area in which Fort Clatsop was located. As one ascends the Lewis and Clark River, which from Clark's maps can be none other than the stream called the Netul River by the explorers, the first land 30 feet high and within 200 yards of the west bank is encountered about 1.7 miles above the mouth. Here a broad low ridge-- a spur projecting slightly eastward from the hills which are nowhere far to the west-- terminates roughly 100 yards from the river's edge. The land between the ridge and the stream is swamp. Near the eastern edge of the ridge are at least two springs, both of which would have been running at the time of year Lewis and Clark were at Fort Clatsop. Present-day, second-growth forest on the land and the historical record both show that this ridge was originally covered with a dense stand of Douglas fir. A small stream enters the river directly south of the ridge.

The points of correspondence are obvious. The identification becomes even more likely when one examines the land farther upstream, or south. Immediately south of the ridge, the high land retreats about a quarter of a mile westward from the river and does not re-approach the stream for nearly half a mile. There the hills approach the river quite closely, but their faces are steep, and they are generally higher than 30 feet. In short, they do not appear inviting as a place for a winter encampment. Therefore, the low ridge which approaches the river between about 1.7 and 1.9 miles from its mouth seems to be the most logical site for the fort.

It must be admitted, however, that there is some evidence in the original records which does not agree with this identification. First, both Clark and Sergeant Ordway say in their journals that Fort Clatsop was 3 miles above the mouth of the river; Sergeant Gass says the distance was "about" 2 miles. The ridge is closer to the Columbia than either of these estimates.

Second, the ridge does not seem to correspond with the location of the fort as shown on any of the Lewis and Clark maps. On at least one of these maps (see Map 6), Clark evidently made an attempt to show the position of the camp in some detail and with care. He pictured it as lying between 2 creeks along a straight section of the river, between 2 bends. The ridge today is directly opposite a conspicuous bend in the river. Also, the creek shown north of the fort by Clark does not particularly resemble in drain age pattern any stream now north of the ridge. On the other hand, the two creeks on the Clark map could be imagined to resemble the two creeks which today are the next two south of the ridge; these two creeks also empty into a fairly straight section of the river, between 2 bends. But, as we have seen, the high ground between these creeks is too far from the river. Therefore, one is forced back to the conclusion that the ridge is the most logical point for the site of Fort Clatsop. After all, streams do change their courses, and it is difficult to estimate distances when traveling by canoe.

Assuming that Fort Clatsop stood on the top of the ridge about 200 yards from the river, there still remains the problem of pinpointing the exact location. Here the Lewis and Clark records are of practically no help. The crest of the ridge is bisected by a very small and shallow drainage basin, running west to east, in which is a spring which runs during the winter months. South and southwest, between this spring and the south edge of the ridge top, there are two or three acres of almost level ground, anywhere on which the winter encampment conceivably could have been located. If the Lewis and Clark records point to any particular section of the ridge top, it is probably to the area south of the spring, since a "small branch" empties into the river directly south of the ridge, and it is known that such a stream was situated "just above" the fort landing place. Surely the landing place would be as close to the fort as the topography permitted. It is this area south of the spring which is covered by the present historic monument

tracts.

But even if it is accepted that the Lewis and Clark records point to the south half of the ridge top as the location, there still is considerable room for speculation as to the exact site. For the solution to this problem one must turn from the written records of the expedition to the realm of tradition and reminiscence.

The site becomes fixed in local tradition. In pinpointing the location of Fort Clatsop, the important fact to bear in mind is that the site was never lost sight of. The place has been an object of interest to travelers, sight-seers, and nearby residents almost from the time Lewis and Clark left it until the present day. As far as is known, none of the persons who visited the site while traces of the fort were still to be seen ever bothered to note the exact location on a large-scale map; nor are the descriptions of the site left by such persons of much value in fixing the location. After all, they were writing of a place whose location was common knowledge. And this knowledge lived on in the minds of the people who had seen the ruins and was transmitted by word of mouth to succeeding generations, until at last it was committed to writing, or at least captured on photographic plates, in 1899 and 1900.

True, tradition sometimes is in error, and word transmitted by mouth over a long period of time has a way of getting warped. In the present case, however, certain internal evidence in the traditional tales gives them a ring of truth which cannot be ignored.

Visitors to Fort Clatsop, 1811-1899. The fact that knowledge of the fort's location remained alive by tradition has not been documented in detail. It comes out only through the accounts left by visitors and in certain reminiscences of pioneer settlers. Therefore, these accounts must be noted at some length.

Maritime traders of both the United States and Great Britain visited the lower Columbia River after the sojourn of Lewis and Clark, as they had before it, but the first permanent settlement was by John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company in 1811. By that year the Lewis and Clark Expedition was definitely linked in the minds of the Astorians with the Netul River, which was known to them as "Lewis River." [3] On October 2, 1811, Gabriel Franchere, one of Astor's men, visited Youngs Bay and saw "the ruins of the quarters erected by Captains Lewis and Clarke." He later wrote that the remains "were but piles of rough, unhewn logs, overgrown with parasite creepers." [4]

Another Astorian, Ross Cox, made a trip to Lewis and Clark's wintering place during May or June, 1812, and noted that the "logs of the house were still standing, and marked with the names of several of their party." [5] That the encampment was an object of general interest for the Astorians may be noted from the journal of another of their number, who wrote that on June 29, 1812, that the fort was then "in ruins" and "very disagreeably situated, being surrounded with swamps and quagmires." [6]

Local interest in the site continued even after Astoria was taken over by the British. On December 14, 1813, Alexander Henry, of the North West Company, and Captain Black, of the Royal Navy, made a trip by canoe to the Fort Clatsop landing place, where they found two houses of Clatsop Indians. Henry recorded in his journal: "We walked up to see the old American winter quarters of Captains Lewis and Clark in 1805-06, which are in total ruins, the wood having been cut down and destroyed by the Indians; but the remains are still visible. In the fort are already grown up shoots of willows 25 feet high." [7]

A Congressional committee, reporting on the occupation of the Oregon Country in 1821, noted that according to information then available in Washington, the remains of Fort Clatsop were "yet to be seen." [8]

By the 1830's, American settlers were beginning to trickle into the Oregon Country, and a number of them took the time and trouble to visit the place where Lewis and Clark had wintered. The ornithologist, John K. Townsend, while not strictly a settler, was among the visitors who recorded his impressions of the "house" at Fort Clatsop. "The logs of which it is composed," he wrote, "are still perfect, but the roof of bark has disappeared, and the whole vicinity is overgrown with thorn and wild currant bushes." [9] An American missionary who saw the site in 1842 reported that Lewis and Clark's "hut had entirely disappeared," but Indians pointed out to him the trail used by the explorers during their journeys from the fort to the seacoast. [10]

Another settler, James Harrell, who visited the scene of the encampment in 1848 later recalled that he saw the foundations of a single building, about 16 feet by 16 feet and 4 logs high. [11]

The prevailing attitude of visitors toward the site is well reflected by a letter written by George Gibbs, a temporary resident of Astoria, to his mother on April 13, 1853. Speaking of Fort Clatsop, Gibbs wrote: "I took a run the other day up the Lewis & Clark's river as it is called to the place of the w[inter] encampment, which long as I have been here I never visited before. The site of their log hut is still visible, the foundation logs rotting where they lay. Their old trail to the coast is just visible being much overgrown with brush . . . Indians are still living who knew them." [12]

Several years later Gibbs again described his visit to Fort Clatsop. He wrote that the remains were "about" 2 miles from the mouth of the Lewis and Clark River. This remark by a trained and accurate observer tends to confirm the conclusion that the site was at or very near the present historic monument property. [13]

As shall be seen in some detail in a later section of this report, settlers began to move into the Fort Clatsop region during the early 1850's, and the ruins which tradition said were those of the winter encampment were obliterated by agricultural operations. Yet the site continued to be marked, if only in the minds of nearby residents and of persons who had earlier visited it; and travelers continued to make pilgrimages to the spot, although records of such visits seem to become fewer and fewer as the years passed.

For instance, on August 18, 1869, Charles M. Scammon, an officer in the United States Revenue Marine Service and one of the remarkable men of his time on the Pacific Coast, the site and thought it worthwhile to make a sketch of it. [14] A year or two later Mrs. Francis Fuller Victor, making observations for a book of description of the Northwest, believed her readers would be interested in the Lewis and Clark wintering site. "Not only have sixty years effaced all traces of their encampment," she reported, "but a house, which stood on the same site in 1853, has quite disappeared, the site being overgrown with trees now twenty feet in height." [15]

By 1885, however, knowledge of the site was beginning to fade. The traditional location of Fort Clatsop had by that date become the eastern terminus of a stage line leading to the popular resort at Seaside. Here passengers by boat from Portland and Astoria debarked and transferred to land conveyance. The Portland Oregonian felt it necessary to point out that the

transfer point was historic ground. "It will be news to many readers of THE OREGONIAN, including pioneers," said an editorial in the issue of June 27, 1885, "to know that this landing is the first spot in Oregon where white men camped." The paper went on to say that the site of Fort Clatsop could "still be distinguished by trenches," an observation which probably was not in accord with fact. [16]

These examples will amply serve to demonstrate that certain remains of log structures located on the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River were early identified by pioneer residents of the area, evidently through testimony of the Indians and from what little had appeared in print about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as the ruins of Fort Clatsop. These remains continued to be pointed out as those of the winter encampment until all trace of them disappeared; and thereafter knowledge of their location was kept alive in the minds of the who had seen the ruins and was transmitted to others, largely by word of mouth.

It was not without some reason, therefore, that the great editor and historian, those Coues, wrote in about 1892 that the site of Fort Clatsop "was fixed with absolute precision" at an early date, "of course became historical, and has been marked on most maps ever since." He even went so far as to say that "the present aspect of the place is better known than what might be discovered by digging in the right spot." [17] Subsequent events were to prove that the matter was not quite as simple to everyone else as it was to Mr. Coues.

Identification by O. D. Wheeler, 1899. Such was the state of knowledge concerning the location of the Fort Clatsop site toward the end of the last century, when Olin D. Wheeler, a writer and publicity man for the Northern Pacific Railway, began his monumental task of retracing the routes of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. In due course his searches brought him face to face with the problem of fixing the location of the winter encampment on the Netul River. Wheeler does not state what research he performed or what evidence he marshaled to lead him to the exact spot, but the inference to be drawn from his narratives is that his method of identification was simple and direct: he organized a party of local historians and old-time residents of the vicinity and went where they told him to go. They guided him to the traditional site known since the days of the Astorians.

Wheeler's visit was made during 1899. Evidently the exact date was August 30. [18] The composition of his party is of interest. Included were William Chance, Judge J. Q. A. Bowlby, George W. Lounsberry, and George Noland, all of Astoria and vicinity; Silas B. Smith, of Warrenton; George H. Himes, representing the Oregon Historical Society of Portland; and, by no means least, George M. Weister, a "landscape photographer" of Portland. "Several of these were old residents," said Wheeler "and thoroughly familiar with the early history of the region." [19]

When the party reached the spot which was pointed out as the site of Fort Clatsop, Wheeler noted that there was "nothing to indicate it except Lewis and Clark's own description as to its location." Nevertheless, he felt there was, "evidently, no question as to the point we visited being the identical spot where the fort stood," since "the opinion of those among the party who were old residents and familiar with the subject and with the locality, was unanimous upon this point." [20]

In accepting this identification, Wheeler seemingly was much impressed by the testimony of Silas B. Smith, a well-educated, middle-aged, practicing attorney from the nearby town of Warrenton. Smith was the grandson of Coboway, or Comowoll, as the name appears in the

Lewis and Clark Journals, the chief of the Clatsop Indians at the time of the expedition's stay on the Netul. Coboway's second daughter, Celiast, or Helen, married Solomon M. Smith, and together they played an honorable part in Oregon history. Silas B. Smith was their son. [21]

Silas Smith told Wheeler a traditional family story to the effect that when Lewis and Clark abandoned Fort Clatsop on March 23, 1806, they gave the structure and its furniture to Chief Coboway. Apparently there is nowhere in the original records of the expedition any direct corroboration of this story, but it is certainly a probable one, since the explorers were very fond of Coboway, calling him "the most friendly and decent Indian that we have met with in this neighborhood." [22] And the story is an old one in the history of the lower Columbia, having appeared in print at least as early as 1884. [23] Smith's account has every appearance of an accurate one told by an honorable man.

According to Smith, his mother, who lived until 1891 frequently maintained that she remembered the time of Lewis and Clark's arrival and that Fort Clatsop was occupied by Coboway and his family during the hunting season for 10 or 15 years after 1806. "Mother said," added Smith, "that in one of the houses they used was a large stump of a tree, which had been cut smooth and which was used as a table." Smith disclaimed having seen any of the fort structures personally, but he professed knowledge of their location from the accounts of his mother and from statements made by other Indians. [24]

Rather strangely, having once established the site of Fort Clatsop to the satisfaction of all assembled, Wheeler did not bother to write down a sufficiently detailed description of it so that it could be identified by other persons coming later. Evidently he, too, saw no necessity of recording a fact which was so generally known. Thus, if it had not been for the presence of Mr. Weister, the "landscape photographer," no more would be known today about the location established by Wheeler than is known about the site of the traditional ruins visited by so many early travelers.

Fortunately, Weister made a series of photographs of the site. Three of the best of these are reproduced in the present report (see Photographs C1, C2, C3). A comparison of these views with the scene today at the tract owned by the Oregon Historical Society, clearly reveals that the site identified by Wheeler is within the present historic monument property (compare Photographs C1 and B4, C2 and B11, C3 and A8). The general configuration of the land, the views seen from the site, and in particular, two cherry trees shown in the 1899 photographs which still stand today, permit no doubt of this fact.

However, the Weister views fail to reveal the exact spot which the Wheeler party identified as the location of the former ruins. In two of the photographs (Photographs C1 and C2), members of the party are shown standing in positions which obviously are meant to convey some information, but exactly what information is not clear. In one of these views (Photograph C2) particularly, the figures evidently are outlining the position of the supposed stockade, but seemingly the fort thus depicted is quite a bit larger than the known 50 feet by 50 feet dimensions of Fort Clatsop. As a matter of fact, in 1899 the exact size of the winter quarters was not known by historians, and thus the Wheeler party was guessing. Where, within the quadrangle outlined by the members, the ruins traditionally stood is not apparent from the available records of the Wheeler visit.

Identification by Oregon Historical Society, 1900. Late in 1899 the Oregon Historical Society resolved to identify the site of Fort Clatsop for the purpose of erecting a monument thereon.

As a result, two members of the Society's Committee on Memorials, L. B. Cox and William Galloway, visited the traditional locations on June 8, 1900. With them was a small group of early settlers who knew the vicinity well. They were Silas B. Smith of Warrenton, who had assisted Wheeler the previous year; Preston W. Gillette, a "well-known pioneer," formerly of Clatsop County; and Carlos W. Shane of Vancouver, who once had lived on the fort site. [25] Reaching the old Seaside landing by boat, the party, guided by Shane and Gillette, climbed up to the benchland above--where Wheeler had marked out his conjectural fort outline--and began to look for familiar landmarks.

Shane's testimony. Although Gillette later claimed the larger the credit for identifying the site, Carlos W. Shane probably gave the most telling evidence. In a deposition made a week later, Shane recounted the facts he must have presented on the ground:

I came to Oregon in 1846, and in 1850 I located a donation land claim on a tract of land which included the site of Fort Clatsop; I built a house on the land in 1851 and occupied it until 1853. A few feet from where I built my house there were at that time the remains of two of the Lewis and Clark cabins . They lay east and west, parallel with each other; and ten or fifteen feet apart. Each cabin was sixteen by thirty feet; Three rounds of the south cabin and two rounds of the north cabin were then standing. In the south cabin stood the remains of a large stump. The location of the old stockade was indicated by second growth timber, while all around it was the original growth, or the stumps of trees which had been cut. In clearing away for my house I set fire to the remains of the old cabins and endeavored to burn them.

My house has long since disappeared but I identify its site from the topography of the ground, from the sloping bank to the river toward the east, and especially from the circumstance of my having cut a large tree at the top of the bank which narrowly missed falling on the house and just reached its rear. I remember approximately the height of this tree and the spot on which it stood.

I assisted Gillette in locating the south-west corner of the tract which was staked off on this visit, and believe that the stake driven there represents very closely, if not absolutely, the southwest corner of the south cabin, and this appeared to be the southwest corner of the stockade. [26]

This deposition has a ring of truth. As will be seen in another section of this report, Shane did locate a land claim covering the present historical monument property in or about 1850, and he held it until August or October, 1852, when he transferred it to his brother.

The most remarkable part of the testimony, however, is Shane's description of the ruins of the Lewis and Clark cabins. As far as the present investigator has been able to determine, there were available in 1900 no printed descriptions which would indicate that Fort Clatsop was made up of two parallel cabins, each about 50 feet long and 16 to 14 feet wide, containing a total of 7 rooms, and separated by a parade ground 20 feet wide. The accounts then known to the public spoke only of 7 huts or houses and of pickets and gates, permitting historians to gain the impression that Fort Clatsop consisted of a group of cabins surrounded by a stockade.

The two rough plans of the fort drawn by William Clark, which provide the only known information concerning the actual dimensions and arrangement of the post, are included in one



of Clark's pocket fieldbooks which was not examined by any scholar until Reuben Cold Thwaites saw it in the possession of Mrs. Julia Clark Voorhis of New York in 1903. Evidently the first printing of one of these plans was in the June, 1904 issue of Scribner's Magazine. [27]

Therefore, Shane's description of the Lewis and Clark cabins as being parallel structures, 16 by 30 feet, and 15 feet apart, must have been based upon independent observation, and keen observation also, to have been remembered so well after about 49 years. In the opinion of the present writer, Shane's testimony upon this point constitutes practically clinching evidence that the ruins which had been identified by tradition since 1811 as those of Fort Clatsop were indeed correctly designated.

It is also to be noted that Shane's mention of a large stump being in the south cabin corroborates the information which Silas B. Smith had received from his Indian mother. Since Shane and Smith had a chance to compare notes before the making of the deposition, however, this part of the testimony may not represent a strictly independent observation. The fact that Shane joined with other members of the party in believing that the cabins had been surrounded by a larger palisaded enclosure only seems to reinforce the view that he and his companions had no knowledge of the Clark ground plans.

Gillette's testimony. On June 16, 1900, Preston W. Gillette made a deposition which contained the information he was able to contribute during the process of identifying the site. Gillette was a pioneer of 1852, and in 1853 he had located a donation land claim about 1-1/2 miles upstream from the traditional Fort Clatsop site. He continued to live in Clatsop County until 1867 and visited the fort site many times. The most important part of Gillette's testimony is as follows:

In October, 1853, . . . I visited the site of Fort Clatsop and saw a section of two logs, each eight or ten feet long, crossed at right angles, which had manifestly been the foundation logs of one of the Lewis and Clark cabins. The ends of the logs were charred, showing that they had been burned. The extent of the stockade was shown by the fact that its site was covered with second growth timber, while all around it stood the trees of the original growth, or the stumps of such as had been cut. Carlos W. Shane sold his place to his brother, Frankland Shane, in 1853, and the latter was occupying it at the time of my visit. I sold Frank Shane some fruit trees, which he planted in the rear of his house. Three of those trees are now standing. Richard M. Moore had in the year 1852 located a donation land claim just south of Carlos W. Shane's and built a house a few feet south of the division line, almost on a line with and but a short distance from the Shane house. This house has since disappeared, but it stood immediately at the head of a little draw in the hill leading down to the river, which draw is now plainly to be seen . . . . When I first knew this spot the trail cut by Lewis and Clark through the timber to the ocean was plainly visible, it having been kept open by the Indians and elk, and it continued as a traveled passage for some fifteen years after my arrival in the county. [28]

The manner in which Gillette's testimony supports that of Shane, particularly in regard to the latter's statement that he "endeavored" to burn the remains of the old cabins, is obvious. In fact, one might almost suspect that these two old neighbors collaborated in their accounts were it not for the fact that Gillette's story has some remarkable and independent confirmation.

In the first place, as has been seen above, the fort site was also visited in 1853 by George Gibbs. The striking similarity between Gibbs's description of the spot, from the logs "rotting where they lay" to the mention of the explorers' trail to the coast, and Shane's is apparent. Also, as will be detailed in a later section of this report, Carlos Shane did transfer his claim to his brother Franklin, evidently late in 1852; and Richard M. Moore did have a claim south of Shane's. Furthermore, the field notes of a survey made in 1856 conclusively prove that both "Shane" and "Moore," in 1856 at least, had residences at the edge of the benchland overlooking the river. [29] It must be concluded, therefore, that Gillette was a reliable, and independent, witness. [30]

Incidentally, Gillette's mention of R. M. Moore calls to mind another bit of evidence which tends to confirm the conclusion that the present historic monument property does contain the site of Fort Clatsop. According to a rather well-known tradition which appeared in print at least as early as 1872, a sawmill occupied the fort site or its vicinity in 1853. One account of the mill is more specific, saying that it was built by R. M. Moore about 1852 and was located on the "old Lewis and Clark landing place." The 1856 surveyors' field notes mentioned above refer to "Moore's Mill" and permit the pinpointing of its location. It was situated on the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River, about 240 feet east-southeast of the southeastern corner of the present Oregon Historical Society property. About 65 feet south of the mill was a "slough," evidently the small "branch" of the Lewis and Clark journals. The confirmation thus given to the old tradition lends strength to the traditional identification of the site. [31]

Marking the site. Under the direction of Shane and Gillette-- who were guided by their memories of the location of the fort ruins and of the Shane and Moore houses, and by the relationships of these sites to each other, and by the topography--the Oregon Historical Society committee established what they believed to be the "southwest corner of the southern cabin." This point, testified Gillette, "very closely, if not exactly, marks the corner of the cabin whose remains I saw in 1853." [32] The committee marked this point by driving in a stake.

Shane and Gillette were convinced that this point not only marked the southwest corner of the Lewis and Clark cabins but also the southwest corner of an extensive stockade, enclosing more than 1/2 acre of ground. Their conclusion was based upon their remembrance of the extent of a patch of second-growth timber which existed at the fort site when they first saw it in the early 1850's. All around this cleared area stood the virgin forest or at least the stumps of a virgin forest which had been recently cut to feed the nearby lumber mill. [33]

The committee agreed with this conclusion and set out to locate the remaining three corners of the fort. L. B. Cox freely admitted at the time that the lines of the stockade were "established by conjecture only." [34]

About 200 feet north of the already established southwest corner was a "small spring branch," and the committee believed it "perfectly rational" to conclude that Lewis and Clark had taken this source of water within the stockade. "A point was consequently established just across this stream," Cox later reported, "and the line was projected 120 feet, or thereabouts, towards the river, reaching the top of the incline." [35] If these words constitute a clear and comprehensible description of the procedure followed in establishing the other three corners, that fact is not apparent to the present investigator.

At any rate, four corners were fixed to the satisfaction of the committee. "It is quite certain," Cox said, "that no more definite delineation of the limits of the stockade is now obtainable."



Stakes were placed at the supposed stockade corners, and an iron pipe was driven into the ground in the center of the area thus delimited. [36] The committee started homeward firmly convinced that the site of Fort Clatsop had been "fixed for all time" and so well marked as to "permit no future doubt" as to the exact location. [37] The next year the Oregon Historical Society purchased a 3-acre tract of land which contained most of the stockade site delimited by its committee.

Years of doubt. Unfortunately, the Oregon Historical Society did not send a surveyor along with its committee, and thus the exact locations of the stakes set in 1900 apparently were not recorded. As the years passed, knowledge of the positions of the stakes faded, until today no one can be found, evidently, who is able to point them out. Probably the entire marking project was somewhat discredited when the Clark ground plans became available in 1904, and it was discovered that Fort Clatsop had been only 50 feet square!

Yet, knowledge of the positions of any of those stakes would be helpful today, if only to assist in determining the location of the all-important one--the one which was placed at the southwest corner of the ruined cabins seen by Shane. The most definite information presently available, seemingly, is that the northeast corner stake was near "the ragged trunk of a spruce tree, limbless, barkless and crownless." [38] Perhaps this is the dead tree which shows in two of the 1899 photographs (see Photographs C1 and C3). An analysis of these and other pictures of the site, including some taken during the committee's visit, reveals the general location as being about where Wheeler fixed it, but it does not permit the pinpointing of the site of the ruins.

The Oregon Historical Society first placed a historical marker at the Fort Clatsop Site in 1912. Although the records of this event conveniently available today are sketchy, the presumption is that this marker was placed on or near the location of the cabins as pointed out by Shane in 1900. Definite proof as to this point seems to be lacking, however. Likewise, the presumption is that the bronze marker at the site today is in the 1912 location, despite the fact that it has been stolen and re-erected more than once. Here again, positive, written testimony seems to be lacking.

Eventually, the Oregon Historical Society itself came to have doubts as to exactly where the fort was situated. Early in 1948, Mr. Lancaster Pollard, then Superintendent of the Society, announced that a motion picture company was "considering" the construction of a replica of Fort Clatsop on the original site and that the Society might eventually attempt to determine precisely where the encampment stood. [39]

A few months later the Astorian-Budget, in an editorial, went even farther, saying, at the present fort marker was located by guess, and that the actual site may be a quarter-mile or more away." [40] At about that same time the Clatsop County Historical Society made a determined, but unsuccessful attempt to fix the site through the use of a mine detector and the analysis of old surveyors' records and early photographs. [41]

Archeological explorations. Evidently as part of this same general search, Mr. Pollard requested the assistance of the National Park Service in making an archeological reconnaissance of the Oregon Historical Society's property at Fort Clatsop; Mr. Louis R. Caywood, Archeologist on the Service's Region Four staff, was given permission to cooperate with the Society in this project, and excavations were made during the period July 9-17, 1948. The objectives of the work are clearly stated by Mr. Caywood in his printed account of the

project: "The site of the fort has been determined approximately for many years . . . . The problem was to definitely determine whether or not there was [physical] evidence of the old fort on the site." [42]

Due to the limited time and labor available, Mr. Caywood was able to excavate only a relatively small area, his trenches and test pits being concentrated in the benchland section east and north of the historical marker (see Map 9). [43] At that time it was rather generally believed by officers of the Society and by local historians that the most likely place to search for the fort remains was in this extreme northeast section of the plateau within the Oregon Historical Society property. Mr. Caywood was advised that this area probably was the fort site, and in fact it is so designated to this date by a sign which stands at his still unfilled excavations.

Mr. Caywood did not find any structural evidence of the fort, but at a depth of about 10 inches he came across such evidences of human occupation as fire pits, charcoal, a "barbecue" pit, pieces of wood showing marks made by metal tools, animal bones, and burnt stones. After analyzing this material, he stated: "evidence is positive that white men at one time occupied this site"; and "it can be safely stated that the excavations were done on the Lewis and Clark site of Fort Clatsop." [44]

Certainly one cannot quarrel with the first of these conclusions in view of the known long record of occupation of the property by white settlers from about 1850 to at least 1881; and the second conclusion is also probably true in a general way, since, as has been amply demonstrated from the historical record, there is little doubt but that Fort Clatsop was somewhere on the benchland where he dug. However, a re-analysis of the evidence uncovered by Mr. Caywood leads the present investigator to the conclusion that there is as yet no positive proof that the materials found had any association with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. It is not impossible, however, that further excavations will uncover evidence which will permit such an association to be demonstrated.

In connection with the present investigation as to the advisability of making the Fort Clatsop site a national monument, a second archeological exploration was made on the Oregon Historical Society property by the National Park Service. This work was conducted by Mr. Paul J. F. Schumacher, Archeologist in the Region Four Office, during the period December 2-8, 1956. The primary objective was to find physical remains which would settle all doubts as to whether or not Fort Clatsop stood on the site under investigation. Also, if found, such remains would be of inestimable value in planning any developments which might be recommended for the property.

Assisted by an efficient labor crew, Mr. Schumacher excavated an extensive area north and east of the historical marker (see Map 9). This section was chosen largely because of the tradition surviving from the period of Mr. Caywood's dig that it was the most logical location for the encampment. After considerable trenching here failed to produce positive results, operations were shifted to a location southwest of the marker. Although there was only a limited time available for work here, enough artifacts were recovered to indicate that this latter area was the site, or was very close to the site, of the farmhouse shown in the 1899 photographs. No evidence assignable to the Lewis and Clark Expedition was found at either locality. [45]

Conclusions concerning identification of site. An analysis of such clues to the location of Fort

Clatsop as are given in the original records of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, a study of the long local tradition as to the location of the fort site, and an examination of the available reminiscences and testimony of pioneer settlers who saw the traditional ruins of the fort and pointed out their location--all these lead to the conclusion that in all probability Fort Clatsop stood somewhere within the 3-acre tract purchased by the Oregon Historical Society in 1901.

This conclusion is based upon the following factors:

- a. There is substantial agreement--or at least no major disagreement--among all these classes of evidence as to the general location of the fort site.
- b. The accounts of Shane and Gillette, who pointed out the exact location of the ruins to the members of the Oregon Historical Society, show every evidence of being accurate and based on independent observation.
- c. The Oregon Historical Society purchased the 3-acre tract specifically to include the site pointed out by Shane and Gillette, and there is no reason to believe that this objective was not accomplished.

However, since 1901 knowledge of the exact location pointed out by Shane and Gillette seems to have been lost. As far as anyone can prove today, the 50-foot square of the fort could have been located almost anywhere on the approximately 1-1/4 acres of benchland within the tract boundaries.

Apparently the only way that the exact site of Fort Clatsop will be determined is by finding some physical remains of the structure. Although the ground on the top of the bluff has been much disturbed by long years of land clearing, agriculture, and domestic habitation, experience at many other frontier post sites has proved that the buried ends of stockade pickets will nearly always survive such treatment. There is hope, therefore, that the actual remains of Fort Clatsop may yet be discovered. To this end, the National Park Service plans to make one additional archeological exploration at Fort Clatsop before concluding the present study.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



## I. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SITE (continued)

### D. Historical narrative and bibliography

Significance of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The journey of Lewis and Clark and their companions from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean and back again during 1804-1806 is one of the best known and most dramatic events in the history of the United States. Its results were many and far-reaching. It marked the first journey across the North American Continent between the Spanish possessions on the south and British Canada on the north. It strengthened the American claim to the Oregon Country. It directly stimulated American fur traders, such as John Jacob Astor, to push operations into the Far West. It made available a great deal of geographical, scientific, and ethnographic information about a vast area hitherto entirely unknown. In so doing, it gave residents of the United States something concrete with which their minds could deal, towards which they could turn their plans of trade, settlement, and expansion.

Not least, the expedition gave the expansion of the American frontier one of its greatest epics. The skill, perseverance, tact, and calm determination shown in overcoming almost overwhelming difficulties encountered in crossing thousands of miles of hostile wilderness have served to inspire generations of Americans. Its impact on the American mind and imagination is amply demonstrated by the way travelers to the Columbia River area, as early as 1811, went considerable distances out of their way merely to see where Lewis and Clark had wintered at Fort Clatsop.

Yet, historians have found it difficult to assess the contributions made by the expedition. History is not a science which may be studied by controlled experiments. Events cannot be repeated, leaving out one factor, to determine what would have happened originally had that factor not been present. And, in the case of Lewis and Clark, the problem is made even more difficult by the fact that the information they brought back was so long in reaching the public.

The consensus remains, however, that the Lewis and Clark Expedition was an event of major significance in the history of the United States. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, it was "all that an exploration ever should be."

Overland to the Pacific. The problem of finding an easy route--preferably by water--across the North American continent was one which had occupied many persons since the time of Columbus. Thomas Jefferson was intrigued by the possibilities of such a discovery, and for 20 years prior to 1803 the exploration of a new track westward to the Pacific from the Mississippi River had been in his mind; Several times he had encouraged persons to undertake the task, but all such projects were premature.

After the turn of the century, however, reports that British fur-trading interests were planning

to expand operations overland to the Pacific made action by the United States more urgent. As President, Jefferson was in a position to act. On January 18, 1803, he sent a private message to Congress urging the development of trade with the Indians of the Missouri Valley and requesting an appropriation for a journey of discovery to the Pacific to investigate the possibilities of commerce, to gather scientific knowledge, and to learn something of the far western Indians. A meager \$2500 was granted.

The command of the expedition was given to Captain Meriwether Lewis, Jefferson's private secretary. Lewis associated his old friend and army comrade, Lieutenant William Clark, in the leadership; and the names of the joint commanders have ever since been linked in fame.

Instructions issued to Lewis by Jefferson on June 30, 1803, outline the purposes of the expedition, chief of which was "to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as, by it's course & communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent, for the purpose of commerce." Particular care was to be taken to record all scientific and geographical facts observed during the journey.

Before Lewis left Washington, news was received of the purchase of Louisiana from France. This event obviated the delays, uncertainties, and even dissimulations which would have been necessary for travel through foreign territory.

The party was assembled and trained in frontier techniques during the winter of 1803-1804 in Illinois, across the Mississippi from St. Louis. The men were enlisted personnel of the United States Army, and only the fact that their pay and subsistence were thus provided enabled the expedition to keep costs within its small appropriation.

In the spring of 1804 Lewis was called to St. Louis to assist in the ceremony of transfer of Upper Louisiana to the United States. Meanwhile, Clark brought the men and equipment across the river to St. Charles, where Lewis joined them. From the latter point the expedition set out on May 21, 1804, in a keelboat and two pirogues up the Missouri. That season they reached the Mandan villages near the present Bismark, North Dakota, and there they erected a log fort and went into camp for the winter.

Having sent back the keelboat and part of the company, the real expedition got under way from Fort Mandan on April 7, 1805. The party consisted of the 2 leaders; 26 enlisted men; 2 interpreters; Clark's Negro servant, York; the interpreter Charbonneau's Indian wife, Sacajawea; and her infant son--33 in all.

The Missouri and its Jefferson Fork were ascended to the Rocky Mountains. When the end of navigation was reached in August, the company was able to obtain horses and a guide from the Shoshone Indians. With this assistance, the party succeeded in crossing the divide to the upper waters of the Clearwater River. Following down that stream, the Snake, and the Columbia, the company, traveling once again by water, on November 7, 1805, reached a point on the north bank of the Columbia near the present Altona, Washington. Here the men thought they could see the Pacific Ocean in the distance.

"Great joy in camp we are in view of the Ocean, this great Pacific Ocean which we been so long anxious to see," wrote Clark in his journal. [46] The reaction of the men, as recorded in the diaries, leaves no doubt but that they considered that the main object of their journey had

been accomplished at this spot.

However, they later realized that what they had seen was not actually the ocean but the estuary of the Columbia River. Their first actual view of the ocean came on November 15, from the expedition's camp near the present town of McGowan, Washington. During the next day or two Sergeant Patrick Gass recorded in his journal, "We are now at the end of our voyage, which has been completely accomplished." [47]

Lewis and Clark and a number of the men walked from the camp down to the ocean near Cape Disappointment, but there is every indication that this action was considered anticlimactic. The men had already concluded that they had reached the Pacific.

The camp near McGowan was exposed to the full force of the sea winds, and game was scarce in the neighborhood. The leaders had hoped to meet a trading ship at the mouth of the Columbia from which their supply of trade goods could be replenished for the homeward journey, but the uncomfortable condition of their party--wet, out of provisions, clothes worn and rotted--made it necessary for them to think of turning inland. Hearing from the Indians that conditions were better on the south side of the river and knowing that a location near the coast there would be convenient for making salt, which was badly needed, the company, by a vote, decided to seek a suitable camp there. If none should be found after a reasonable search, the plan was to start the return journey at least as far as the Mount Hood area, living off the country as conditions best permitted. [48]

Location for winter quarters. The company crossed to the south bank of the Columbia and started downstream. High waves and stormy weather made progress difficult, and the party was halted at the present Tongue Point. Captain Lewis and a few companions went ahead to scout, and on December 5 the leader returned to announce that he had found "a good situation and Elk sufficient to winter on" by a small river a short distance to the west. Two days later the main party moved to this location. Clark described the place as follows in his journal:

We assended a river which falls in on the South Side of this Bay [the present Youngs Bay] 3 miles to the first point of high land on the West Side, the place Capt. Lewis had viewed and formed in a thick groth of pine about 200 yards from the river, this situation is on a rise about 30 feet higher than the high tides leavel and thickly Covered with lofty pine. [49]

Gass and Ordway in their journals contribute the information that the Netul River--the Indian name for the stream on which they camped--was about 100 yards wide opposite the new site; and Gass contradicted Clark by saying that the location was only 2 miles above the mouth of the river. He adds that the men carried their luggage to a spring, where they made camp. [50]

Building Fort Clatsop. Cutting trees and clearing the site for the proposed fort began almost at once, surely by December 9; and by the evening of the 10th foundations were laid for the "huts." The raising of the walls began on the 11th. The log work for the cabins was completed on December 14th, and the men began to roof one room, for a "meat house," with split puncheons 10 feet long, 2 feet wide, and about 1-1/2 inches thick.

The roofing of all the rooms was completed by December 24. The walls were daubed or "chinked" with mud, and the rooms had puncheon floors. Living quarters were equipped with puncheon bunks. The captains moved into their still unfurnished rooms on December 23.



Some of the men moved into the new quarters on Christmas Eve, and all were under cover to celebrate Christmas.

The men were glad to get in out of the rain, but they soon found themselves uncomfortable again--their fires smoked "verry bad." Only the officers' rooms had chimneys originally, so the men set to work putting "backs and enside chimneys" in the living quarters. Other touches of comfort were "a wide slab hued to write on" for each of the officers "and a table and two seats" for their use. Mats of "rushes and flags" were purchased from the Indians.

Following Christmas, the journals indicate that the men began to erect pickets and gates. There were two gates, a main gate which was locked at night and a water gate which could be used by the garrison at any hour, though at night it was opened and closed by the sentinel.

The fort was considered completed on the evening of December 30, although the next day a sentinel box was built and 2 "sinks" were dug. The new structure was named "Fort Clatsop" after the Clatsop Indians who inhabited the neighborhood.

The Lewis and Clark journals do not contain a description of the post, but two ground plans--which do not entirely agree--drawn by Clark give quite a detailed idea of it. [51] According to these diagrams the post was 50 feet square. One side was formed by a cabin containing three rooms, each with what seems to be a central fire- place. These were the quarters for the men. The opposite side of the square was formed by another long cabin containing four rooms, two (or possibly three) with fireplaces and one with an outside chimney. Two of these rooms were the officers' quarters, and one was the "meat house." The latter had a fireplace and a door with a lock. The officers' rooms, at least, had windows. The space between the two cabins formed a parade ground 20 feet wide and 48 feet long. The ends of the parade were closed by pickets, and the main gate was in the center of one wall, evidently that facing south (see Maps 7 and 8).

Winter at Fort Clatsop. After moving into their new quarters, the members of the company spent three miserable additional months in the lower Columbia region. They were plagued by rain, sickness, and fleas. Hunting merely to get food to keep alive took up a considerable portion of the time. A small party was sent over to the coast, to the site of the present Seaside, to boil ocean water to make salt. Several expeditions went out to explore the surrounding country, notably one headed by Clark which visited the coast south of Tillamook Head. Perhaps the most important activity undertaken during this period was the reworking of the journals by the leaders, and the preparation of organized accounts of the scientific data gathered thus far during the journey. Here also Clark prepared many of the maps which were among the most significant contributions of the expedition.

Yet, as Clark admitted in his journal, the stay at Clatsop was not without its better side. "At this place," he wrote on the day of the expedition's departure, "we . . . have lived as well as we had any right to expect, and we can say that we were never one day without 3 meals of some kind a day either pore Elk meat or roots, notwithstanding the repeated fall of rain which has fallen almost constantly since we passed the long narrows." [52]

Return journey. At one o'clock on the afternoon of May 23, 1806, the men pushed their canoes away from the Fort Clatsop landing place and started their trip home. The route was up the Columbia, the Snake, and the Clearwater drainage to the Rockies. Continuing eastward, the party was divided, so that both the Missouri and the Yellowstone were descended. The

company was reunited near the junction of these streams, and the Missouri was rapidly descended. St. Louis was reached on September 23, 1806. The great adventure was ended. [53]

History of Fort Clatsop, 1806-1849. As has already been seen, there is a tradition, apparently well-founded, to the effect that Lewis and Clark, upon their departure from Fort Clatsop, gave the structure and its furniture to Coboway, or Comowoll, the Clatsop chief who had been so friendly and helpful to the party. According to Coboway's descendants, the chief occupied the fort during the hunting season for 10 or 15 years after the expedition's departure.

We have also examined in considerable detail the manner in which, as early as 1811 when the remains of the fort were in fairly good condition and when Indians who had seen it occupied by the expedition were still available to point out its location, the fort developed into an object of interest to travelers and early Oregon Country settlers and was frequently visited. By this means knowledge of its location became fairly widespread and was passed on from generation to generation.

Occupation of the site, 1849-1901. After the Oregon Country was acquired by the United States in 1846, settlement of the area about the mouth of the Columbia moved at an accelerated rate. S. M. Henell, of Astoria, was impressed with the potential value of the traditional site of Fort Clatsop, and in 1849 he put a man on the property to make improvements, intending to establish a claim on the land. The next year, however, Thomas Scott "jumped" the property and established a claim to it under the Donation Act.

Scott held the site for a short time and then traded it to Carlos W. Shane for another piece of land. Shane, a pioneer of 1846, later stated that his claim to the property dated from 1850. He built a house "a few feet" from the ruins of Fort Clatsop in 1851 and occupied it until 1852 or 1853. [54]

Shane's brother, Franklin D. Shane, and his brother's wife, Rachel Ada, moved onto the property in August or October, 1852, and about that time Carlos transferred his claim to Franklin and took up another tract farther up the river. [55]

In 1852 Richard M. Moore came to the Fort Clatsop vicinity with the intention of building a large steam sawmill. The place he desired for the mill was the site of the old Lewis and Clark landing, but this spot was already claimed by Carlos W. Shane. According to a newspaper account of 1900, the two men came to an agreement, and the lines of the Shane claim were moved north to give Moore the site he wanted. [56]

Apparently there is confirmation of this account. In 1855 Franklin Shane filed legal notice of his claim, saying that the southern boundary touched the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River at a point about 200 yards "below" Moore's mill. Since the location of the mill is known, the boundary, if "below" means "downstream" (i.e. north), was very close to the 1/4 corner between Sections 35 and 36, T.8N., R.10W., W.M. [57] Further confirmation of this boundary is found in Gillette's deposition of June 16, 1900, in which he said that Moore built a house on the benchland a few feet south of the division line. The surveyors' notes of 1856 show that "Moore's House" was about 66 feet south and about 197 feet west of the 1/4 corner.

At any rate, the mill was built, and the vicinity of Fort Clatsop soon became quite a lively settlement, "with 35 or 40 people, all busy clearing land, cutting sawlogs, sawing lumber, etc."



For 2 or 3 years there was hardly a week that did not find one or more ships there, loading lumber for San Francisco. One witness said that he had seen 5 ships there at one time. In 1853 the Fort Clatsop precinct is said to have polled 56 votes. However, in 1854 the price of lumber dropped, and milling became so unprofitable that the mill closed down. This event and the Indian Wars of 1855 drove people away, and by 1856 there was "only one inhabitant in the entire precinct." [58] By about 1870 all trace of the mill had disappeared except a great pile of sawdust and some foundation timbers.

Evidently Moore abandoned his claim after the mill closed, because in July, 1857, when Franklin Shane filed a new notification for his own claim, the southern boundary had been moved southward again to 676.5 feet south of the 1/4 corner. The Shane claim once more included the traditional site of the Lewis and Clark landing place. And the southern boundary remained essentially in this position when Donation Certificate No. 5001 was finally issued for Shane's 320.5 acres on October 30, 1877. [59] The Shane Claim (Donation Land Claim 56) extended down the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River for nearly half a mile from the southeast corner (which was only a short distance south of the old landing), and it extended westward from the river for nearly a mile.

Meanwhile, some rather important changes had taken place up on the benchland where Shane and Moore had built their houses. As late as 1853, if Gillette's memory was accurate, a clearing of half an acre or more which had been made by Lewis and Clark was still evident because of the second-growth timber which stood on it. Surrounding this old clearing were virgin forest and the stumps of original-growth trees cut to feed Moore's mill. About 1853, however, Franklin Shane began to clear his land, and soon he had an orchard set out on the level ground back of his house. In 1856 surveyors following the section line between Sections 35 and 36 reported traversing an extensive "garden" running up the bluff from the river and across the benchland. [60]

Rachel Ada Shane died in 1855, and Franklin Shane followed her to the grave between 1860 and 1867. His donation land claim, or such of it as had not already been sold, passed to his two daughters, Ada E. (or Elizabeth Ada) Shane and Mary Aramenta Shane. [61] Both of these daughters, evidently, married men named Smith, Ada, F. B. Smith, and Mary, Wade Hampton Smith. In 1872 Wade Hampton acquired Ada's interest in such portions of the property as had not previously been sold. [62] His property included the south 1/2 of the claim, upon which the site of old Fort Clatsop was situated.

From the latter date the legal history of the Shane claim becomes complicated. Parcels of land, and clay and mineral rights to various parcels, were disposed of, and then subdivided and re-transferred many times. For the purposes of this study, there seems to be no necessity of following all these changes of ownership, since they throw no real light on the location of the site of Fort Clatsop. The site is fixed independently by evidence other than the chain of title. The important fact is that the site was within the Shane Donation Land Claim, the boundaries of which were reasonably well established as early as 1857 and are marked on present-day maps (see Map 2).

Sometime about 1856 Franklin Shane seems to have lost interest in his orchard and garden on the Fort Clatsop site, and he failed to maintain them. A visitor to the property about 1870 reported the site overgrown with young forest trees about 20 feet high. The house built by Carlos W. Shane had disappeared by that date. [63] However, between about 1870 and 1872--the date does not seem clearly established--W. H. Smith began to improve the property once

again. He built a fairly substantial house on the land, in the locality where the Shane and Moore houses previously stood. This is the house which appears in the 1899 photographs. [64]

Several years later, between about 1876 and 1879, Joseph B. Stevenson and his wife Louisa moved into the W. H. Smith house. According to Stevenson's daughter, he purchased the place from Smith; but the county records seemingly do not contain documents to attest to such a sale, and Smith later sold to others the property on which this house stood. Evidently, therefore, Stevenson merely rented the tract.

Stevenson, his daughter later recalled, "spared nothing" to make the Fort Clatsop site a fine home for his family. He developed a "lovely" yard, with several fruit trees and a croquet court. Among other economic activities, he made charcoal on the property. During the cleanup activities at the historical monument after World War II by local civic organizations, the remains of a charcoal pile or pit were discovered. Perhaps this was a relic of Stevenson's operations. After several years, between about 1881 and 1889, the Stevensons moved to Portland. The subsequent history of the old Smith house is not known, but in 1900 it was "out of repair and tenantless." [65]

Meanwhile, a temporary economic revival had come to the general vicinity of the Fort Clatsop Site. The old Lewis and Clark landing proved to be a convenient place to tie up ships, and during the summers of 1860-1862 the United States Revenue Service overhauled its cutter there. [66] During the late 1850's residents of Portland and other inland settlements began to seek relief from the summer heat by spending vacations along the fine sea beaches south of the mouth of the Columbia. It was found that the most convenient way of reaching the coast under transportation conditions then existing was to go by boat to the Fort Clatsop landing and then by hired horse or carriage over the hills to the Clatsop plains and the beach. In July, 1862, the Oregon Steam Navigation Company inaugurated a regular summer service by the steamer Jennie Clark directly from Portland to Fort Clatsop Landing. [67]

This service continued for a number of years. Traffic increased considerably after 1873, when Benjamin Holladay opened his famous Seaside House on the beach. On May 6, 1875, W. H. Smith and his wife sold 5 acres of land along the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River to the Oregon Steam Navigation Company for wharf and transfer facilities. This property included the old Lewis and Clark landing place. [68]

During the late 1870's and early 1880's, the Stevensons, residents on the Fort Clatsop site, operated a line of spring wagons to take passengers back and forth between the landing and the beach, and evidently their service was followed by a regular stage line. By the late 1880's traffic had so increased that larger boats were required to bring down the crowds from Portland. The Lewis and Clark River was too shallow to accommodate these vessels, which had to stop at Astoria. Smaller shuttle boats, like the General Canby, were used for the run between that point and the old landing. The Oregon Rail way and Navigation Company, which succeeded to the assets of the older steamship firm, maintained a wharf and a substantial "wharf room" at Fort Clatsop.

Toward the end of the century other routes of transportation were developed to the coast. By 1905 there was a railroad to Seaside, and the Fort Clatsop wharf was referred to in correspondence as the place where passengers "formerly" landed. Evidently, however, small boats from Astoria still continued to use the landing at that date. [69]

While Clatsop Landing was still prospering as a transfer point for Seaside passengers, a new industry developed in the vicinity which altered the landscape somewhat near the site of the Lewis and Clark encampment and, apparently, posed a threat to the very ground on which the old fort had stood. It was discovered that the ridge or bluff on which the site was located contained a clay which was well suited for the making of ceramic products.

On September 24, 1887, Mary Shane Smith sold an undivided 1/2 of the rights to the mineral and clay under most of the Shane Donation Claim to the Oregon Pottery Company. [70] Thereafter, the records of Clatsop County reveal numerous transactions relating to these and other clay rights in the vicinity. Over the next three decades a number of companies, including the Western Clay Manufacturing Company and Gladding, McBean & Co., acquired interests in the neighborhood. The complicated story of these clay right transfers cannot be treated in the present report, but it should be noted that these rights evidently are still valid today and that for some parcels of the former Shane property they apparently are held by persons other than the present land owners.

Apparently there is little information readily available as to exactly where the clay was extracted and how long operations continued. In 1902 a prospective purchaser for part of the south half of the Shane Donation Land Claim stated, "clay has been continuously removed" from the property. [71] When the Oregon Historical Society purchased its 3-acre tract in 1901, its officers were aware of the danger to the historic Fort Clatsop site resulting from the outstanding right to remove clay, but they were unable to do anything about it. That there may have been good grounds for their fear is revealed by the letter of a person interested in the former Shane property who wrote in 1902 that the 3-acre tract contained "the land most available for clay." [72] As far as is known, however, no clay was ever actually removed from the fort site proper, although the bluff faces southwest of it appear to show evidence of excavation. Seemingly commercial interest in the deposits had waned by the late 1920's, for when the Oregon Historical Society purchased 2 additional acres in 1928, the clay rights came with the land.

Acquisition of site by Oregon Historical Society. On December 15, 9, the Directors of the Oregon Historical Society, which was then one year old, requested the Society's Committee on Memorials to proceed as soon as practicable to determine the exact locations of certain places of historic interest in Oregon including the "site of the Lewis and Clark encampment near Astoria." [73] The object of this move was to permit the Society to acquire tracts of land at these sites "for the purpose of erecting monuments upon them" whenever the funds could be obtained. [74]

On June 8 of the next year, as has been seen, two members of the committee, and a group of early settlers of the vicinity visited the traditional site of Fort Clatsop; and the pioneers pointed out the spot where they remembered having seen, during the 1850's, ruins of log structures which were then said to be the remains of the Lewis and Clark wintering post. On the basis of this evidence, the party marked off the site of the fort, in the committee's words, "as near as can now be determined." [75]

After much negotiation, which involved the determination and then one or more re-determinations of the most desirable boundaries, the Oregon Historical Society on September 24, 1901 purchased for \$250 a 3-acre tract which contained the site of the Lewis and Clark cabins as pointed out by the pioneer settlers. It is interesting to note that for an additional expenditure of about \$650, the Society could have acquired a much larger tract, almost 160

acres. This opportunity, however, was rejected. [76]

Acquisition of Second Oregon Historical Society tract. The Oregon Historical Society had always regretted that the land purchased in 1901 did not include the spring from which the explorers traditionally were believed to have drawn their water. Evidently the spring thus referred to was the one which exists today about 50 feet north of the Oregon Historical Society property and which the Committee on Memorials had believed was included within the Fort Clatsop stockade. This spring was not situated on property which was available for purchase in 1901. During 1926 a proposal was made to add quite a large parcel of property lying north, west and south of the original tract, but nothing came of it. [77]

In May, 1928, the Society was "suddenly" given an opportunity to purchase about 2 additional acres adjoining its first tract. In soliciting funds to cover the sale price, T. C. Elliott, of the Society, stated that the property thus offered was the "land upon which these springs flow." [78] This remark was rather strange in view of the fact that when the Society purchased a second tract of 1.9 acres on May 15, 1928, it adjoined the original tract on the south and evidently did not include a second spring which is located at the foot of the bluff southwest of the original three acres. [79]

Subsequent history of the property. The later administration and development of the Oregon Historical Society property as a historic monument, the acquisition of additional tracts of land by the Clatsop County Historical Society and by Clatsop County, the cooperation of local civic groups in the maintenance of the property, and the growth of the movement to have the site made a national monument are all treated at considerable length and with adequate documentation in Section IV of this report. In order to give some continuity to the account, however, a very brief overall review of the history of the property as a historic monument is given here.

After acquiring the 3-acre tract in 1901, the Oregon Historical Society was able to do little to improve it for a number of years. However, merely by holding it, the Society undoubtedly preserved the Fort Clatsop Site from disturbance and alteration by commercial, agricultural, or residential developments.

A marker was placed on the property in 1912 ; and in or about 1928 the site was cleared of brush, a flagpole was installed, and a bronze tablet erected on a cement base. Clatsop County assisted in this latter project by widening and improving the road leading to the tract. It is recorded that the citizens of Astoria contributed "considerable time and money" toward these improvements; and this cooperative local action has been an important factor in the maintenance and development of the site to the present day.

During subsequent years the Oregon Historical Society kept the property open to the public and, with local help, maintained it as a historic monument as far as the limited funds available would permit. Evidently, however, there were periods when little or no upkeep was performed. This neglect was particularly severe during World War II, due to the Society's "inability to get maintenance help."

By the end of the war the site was in an unsightly condition, being described in the local press as a "garbage dump." The Clatsop County Historical Society, with headquarters in Astoria, in 1947 spearheaded a movement to rehabilitate the area. There followed a series of cleanup projects. The Astoria Junior Chamber of Commerce joined in this work in 1953, and as a

result the site was considerably improved. But it had been realized for some time by the Oregon Historical Society and the local civic groups that volunteer labor alone would not prove adequate in the long run for the proper operation of a historic monument which was increasingly becoming an object of interest to travelers and other sight-seers. Therefore, over the years there had been a series of proposals to have the site maintained by the State Highway Commission, by an agency supported by special local taxes, or by the Federal Government.

All of these matters more or less came to a head late in 1953 and early in 1954 with the development of plans to hold a Lewis and Clark Sesquicentennial Celebration in 1955 along the route of the expedition. The citizens of Astoria determined to center their part of the celebration about the Fort Clatsop Site; and the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Clatsop County Historical Society formed a group to finance the improvement of the property. The chief feature of the planned development was to be the erection of a full-sized replica of Fort Clatsop on or near the original site. The Oregon Historical Society gave its permission for this project, and steps to bring it to fruition were soon under way.

On February 7, 1955, the Clatsop County Historical Society, through what amounted to a gift from M. A. Riekkola, acquired title to about an acre of ground on the benchland immediately west of the Oregon Historical Society property. On February 15 it leased from Clatsop County another 1-acre tract immediately north of the land acquired from Mr. Riekkola. [80] The larger part of these two acres was cleared, and an extensive graveled parking lot was placed on the southern portion. Adequate entrance and exit roads were developed to this lot.

The Crown Zellerbach Corporation donated the logs needed for the reconstruction of Fort Clatsop, and they were assembled by skilled Finnish workmen using plans which were based upon Clark's drawings. After notching and preliminary assembly, the logs were separated and sent to a treating plant for saturation with chemical preservatives. They were then re-assembled on the Oregon Historical Society property directly west of the historical marker. The replica, which has never been entirely completed, is a reasonable approximation of the Fort Clatsop which is known from the Lewis and Clark records, but a lack of funds and a desire to give the building reasonable permanence resulted in a number of compromises with the facts as presented in the original journals. And it must be admitted that even if all these facts had been followed faithfully, there still would remain room for a good deal of conjecture as to the exact construction of the original fort.

The reconstructed Fort Clatsop was dedicated on August 21, 1955. Other improvements which were part of the same general project included a well, pump, drinking fountain, and picnic tables. A heavy wire fence was subsequently built around the replica to protect it from vandals.

The site continues to be operated as a historic monument by the Oregon Historical Society, in cooperation with the Clatsop County Historical Society. In general, the agreement appears to work as follows: the Portland organization provides policy direction, such funds as are required, and handles certain contractual and legal matters; while the local groups provide the immediate on-the-spot administration, such as the collection of fees and the supervision of maintenance. During the summer of 1956 a caretaker was stationed on the property during the daylight hours so that visitors could gain entrance to the reconstructed fort.

Critical Bibliography. The literature on the Lewis and Clark Expedition is extensive. Most of it, however, depends for basic facts upon a relatively modest list of original source materials.



This observation is particularly applicable to accounts of the party's stay at Fort Clatsop. Beyond what appears in the writings of the expedition's members, practically nothing is known of occurrences at the Lewis and Clark camp during the winter of 1805-1806. The only significant additional knowledge on this subject is contained in the reminiscences of several descendants of Indians who associated with the explorers during their winter sojourn near the mouth of the Columbia.

No attempt has been made to examine the original manuscript journals and other records of the expedition during the present investigation. Most of these sources have been printed in such detail and with such care as to remove the necessity for such examination except with regard to unusual problems. During recent years some additional Lewis and Clark manuscripts have come to light, and they remain yet unpublished. Through the courtesy of Mr. Herbert E. Kahler, Chief Historian of the National Park Service, and Mr. Oliver W. Holmes of the National Archives, these new materials have been searched and have been found to contain no information which would be helpful to the present study.

The first authentic narrative of the expedition to appear in print was the journal of Sergeant Patrick Gass. Published in 1307, it has been reprinted many times. Although pedestrian in style, it contains certain information not found elsewhere concerning the activities of the expedition near the mouth of the Columbia. The edition generally used for the present study was Gass's Journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Reprinted from the Edition of 1811 (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1904).

The official, and standard, account of the Lewis and Clark exploration was prepared by Nicholas Biddle from the finished log of the journey, supplemented by other manuscripts and journals, including those of Private Joseph Whitehouse and Sergeant John Ordway, and by the personal explanations of George Shannon, a member of the party. Biddle's work was issued under the following title: History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark, to the Sources of the Missouri, thence . . . to the Pacific Ocean . . . Prepared for the Press by Paul Allen, Esquire (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1814). This famous account has also been reprinted a number of times. The best-known of these editions is that prepared by the famous historian Elliott Coues: History of the Expedition under the command of Lewis and Clark . . . A New Edition, Faithfully Reprinted from the Only Authorized Edition of 1814; with Copious Critical Commentary, Prepared upon Examination . . . of the Original Manuscript Journals and of the Explorers (4 vols., New York, 1893). The annotation provided by Coues has held up quite well despite new facts which have come to light since he wrote; but he took certain liberties with the journal texts as reproduced by Biddle, who, in turn, had made certain refinements, additions, and deletions.

By far the best printed source for knowledge of the Lewis and Clark Expedition is the collection of journals, notebooks, and maps edited by Reuben Cold Thwaites under the title, Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806; Printed from the Original Manuscripts . . . Now for the First Time Published in Full and Exactly as Written (7 vols. and atlas, New York, 1904-1905). Thwaites not only reproduced carefully the complete texts of the Lewis and Clark journals and notebooks available to Biddle and Coues, but also those of several field books, letters, and other manuscripts not known to scholars until 1903. Also reproduced are several journals by members of the party other than Lewis and Clark. Time has proved that some of Thwaites's editing was careless, and many of his notes are now known to be in error, but the exact transcriptions of all of the then available texts and the reproductions of the splendid Clark maps make this work indispensable for serious study of the expedition.

Sergeant John Ordway's journal was not available to Thwaites, but it was later found and edited by Milo M. Quaife in The Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway, Kept on the Expedition of Western Exploration, 1803-1806 (Publications of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Collections, XXII, Madison, 1916). The Ordway journal contains information of importance relating to Fort Clatsop.

The only other original Lewis and Clark source material which needs to be noted here is the condensed version of the journals edited by Bernard DeVoto, The Journals of Lewis and Clark (Boston; Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953). Admittedly not for use by scholars, this skillful abridgment preserves the flavor of the original narratives and provides a fine running account of the trans-continental journey. Unfortunately, the condensation has been so extensive for the period during which the party was at Fort Clatsop that DeVoto's text gives little information on the location or physical structure of the fort. However, the preface and the introduction provide valuable critical commentary upon the sources and a fine summary of the background, accomplishments, and significance of the expedition. Since DeVoto personally visited most of the locations mentioned in the journals, his notes on the geography are illuminating.

Secondary works on the Lewis and Clark expedition are legion. No attempt can be made to list them all here. Perhaps the most useful for the purposes of this study was Olin D. Wheeler, The Trail of Lewis and Clark, 1804-1904 (2 vols., New York, 1904). Wheeler made a sincere attempt to follow the route of the explorers, and his was the first serious effort to identify the site of Fort Clatsop. A second edition of this work was issued in 1926.

The geographical background and the significance of the expedition are perhaps nowhere presented so well as in Bernard DeVoto, The Course of Empire (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952). Other secondary works of value for the overall story of the expedition, though they throw little light on Fort Clatsop, are John E. Bakeless, Lewis and Clark, Partners in Discovery (New York; Morrow, 1947); Elijah H. Criswell, Lewis and Clark: Linguistic Pioneers (University of Missouri Studies, XV, Columbia, 1940); and Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast (2 vols., San Francisco, 1884).

Periodical literature bearing upon the expedition is also voluminous. One article which should be mentioned because it bears directly upon the topic of this study, is Frederick V. Holman, "Lewis and Clark Expedition at Fort Clatsop," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXVII (September 1926), 265-278. Another thoughtful study of the meaning of the expedition is F. G. Young, "The Higher Significance in the Lewis and Clark Exploration," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, VI (March 1905), 1-25.

For one of the main parts of this study--the history of Fort Clatsop after Lewis and Clark left it and the exact location of the site--there was little organized source material available. The facts had to be dug out of a vast assortment of magazine articles, general histories, travelers' narratives, county records, newspaper accounts, and other widely scattered sources. There is no need to list them all here; they have been cited at the appropriate places in the narrative report. As far as could be determined, there has been only one previous serious attempt to assemble this phase of the story. Quite recently the staff of the Oregon Historical Society prepared a typewritten, 5-page paper, "The Fort Clatsop Site" (no place, no date), which was very useful in directing attention to fugitive source materials. In this part of the study, of course, the records of the Oregon Historical Society, both published and manuscript, were of inestimable value, and appreciation is expressed to Mr. Thomas Vaughan, Director, and other members of the Society's staff for making them available.

Many persons and organizations contributed bibliographical information to this study. Special mention must be made of Mr. Otto A. Owen, President, and Mr. Burnby Bell, Corresponding Secretary of the Clatsop County Historical Society, who lent materials from their own collections and made available the Society's scrapbooks, which contain newspaper clippings of much value and which would have been very difficult to find elsewhere. The personal scrapbook of Mr. Walter G. Johnson, Astoria, was also made available for this study, and it too contained many clippings of importance. The records of Clatsop County also contain many items useful to the present investigation, and particular thanks are due to Mr. Emil Berg, County Assessor, and to Mrs. Constance Bernier, Assistant in the County Clerk's Office, for making them accessible. Photographs formed an important part of this study, and many of the present-day ones which appear in this report were taken by Mr. Paul J. F. Schumacher.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section1d.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004



# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



### IV. PARK DATA

#### A. Ownership of site

1. Present historic site property. The property now being operated as a historic the Oregon Historical Society in cooperation with the Clatsop County Historical Society, and that which has been suggested as a possible national monument, consists of three contiguous tracts of land. The exterior boundaries of these tracts enclose an area of about 6.7 acres. However, a county road runs through the property, the right of way which occupies approximately .8 acre. The net area presently used for historical purposes is, therefore, about 5.9 acres.

The locations and boundaries of these three tracts are shown on Map 2. Legal descriptions are given in the Appendix. The owner ship of each of the three tracts, as determined from available abstracts of title, the Clatsop County Records of Deeds, the records of the Oregon Historical Society, the records of the Clatsop County Historical Society, and interviews with officials of Clatsop County, is as follows:

a. Oregon Historical Society Tract. The property owned by the Oregon Historical Society consists of two parcels:

Parcel (1). This parcel, consisting of about 2.9 acres, was purchased by the Oregon Historical Society for \$250 from the American Mortgage Company of Scotland, Ltd., by Warranty Deed dated September 24, 1901. Excepted from this sale was the right to take clay from the property. The legal history of these clay rights is exceedingly complex, but as far as the present writer was able to determine, they have never been acquired by the Oregon Historical Society. Although commercial clay has not been extracted in this vicinity for a number of years, the possibility that operations might be resumed remains as a potential, if very remote, cloud upon the use of the property for historical monument purposes. This parcel contains the traditional site of Fort Clatsop, the reconstructed fort, the historical marker, the well, pump, and rest rooms.

Parcel (2). This parcel, consisting of about 2 acres, was purchased by the Oregon Historical Society for \$250 from Gladding, McBean & Co. by Warranty Deed dated May 15, 1928. The clay rights relating to this parcel were acquired by the Oregon Historical Society along with the land.

The Oregon Historical Society has leased the oil, gas, and mineral rights relating to both of the above-mentioned parcels (except for a 30-foot strip along the east side of the Fort Clatsop Loop Road right of way) to the Standard Oil Company of California. The lease, executed May 2, 1955, is for a term of 10 years and must be renewed annually as long as drilling is not actually under way. At present, the lessee has paid fees which will keep the contract in force until May 2, 1957. Once drilling has been commenced, however, the lease will automatically

remain in force as long as such work progresses or as long thereafter as oil, gas, or other mineral is produced.

In making the lease, the Oregon Historical Society inserted provisions designed to protect the property from physical defacement. The principal such provision is a stipulation that the lessee shall not conduct any operations above a depth of 500 feet from the surface of the land without the prior consent of the Society. As far as the present writer could determine through local inquiry, no oil or gas is being extracted commercially in Clatsop County at the present time, and it is rumored that certain oil and gas leases in the Fort Clatsop area have not been renewed by their lessees.

The Oregon Historical Society holds its acquisitions, including its Fort Clatsop property, in trust for the State of Oregon. Should the Society ever cease to operate, its assets would become the property of the State. According to Mr. Thomas Vaughan, Director of the Society, this trust provision would not present any legal impediment to the transfer of the Fort Clatsop property by the Society to the United States should the establishment of a national monument be authorized.

b. Clatsop County Tract. The property presently owned by Clatsop County at the Fort Clatsop site is approximately .9 acre in extent. This tract lies immediately to the west of the northern half of the Oregon Historical Society's Parcel (1). The northern part of the present parking lot occupies a section of this tract. The County's title was obtained through tax foreclosure proceedings on April 19, 1932.

By a deed dated October 30, 1905, this tract was sold for one dollar by A. M. Smith, et al, to the Concomly Tribe No. 7, Improved Order of Redmen, and to the Astoria Aerie No. 17 of the Fraternal Order of Eagles. Excepted from the sale were all oil and natural gas, if any, "in and under said real estate." Also a portion of the tract was subject to a right to dig clay granted to other persons by a prior deed. Thus, the oil, gas, and clay rights to this tract are not now owned by Clatsop County.

By an unrecorded lease, dated February 15, 1955, Clatsop County leased the tract for a period of 10 years to the Clatsop County Historical Society "for historical purposes only." The annual rental is one dollar. The lease contains the statement that the lessor's title was obtained through tax foreclosure proceedings, and it contains the provision that the lease shall be voided if the lessor should be divested of title.

According to information supplied orally by Mr. Otto A. Owen, President of the Clatsop County Historical Society, and by County Judge Guy Boyington, the Clatsop County Historical Society has made an offer to the County for the purchase of this tract. It is anticipated that the County will act favorably upon this application within about 6 months.

c. Clatsop County Historical Society Tract. The property owned by the Clatsop County Historical Society at the Fort Clatsop site is approximately .9 acre in extent. It lies immediately south of the Clatsop County Tract and immediately west of the southern half of the Oregon Historical Society's Parcel (1). The larger part of the parking lot occupies a section of this tract.

This tract was purchased by the Clatsop County Historical Society for \$1 from Archie Riekkola, et ux, by a Bargain and Sale Deed (still unrecorded as of December 11, 1956) dated

February 7, 1955. Excepted from the sale and reserved unto the grantors, their heirs and assigns, were "all minerals of any nature whatsoever including coal, iron, natural gas and oil, upon or in said land, together with the use of such of the surface as may be necessary for exploring for and mining or otherwise extracting and carrying away the same." The clay right situation concerning this piece of property is not clear and probably cannot be made so without a complete title search. Evidently, however, these rights were conveyed by a former owner to the Oregon Pottery Company in 1887 and have not been recovered by the Clatsop County Historical Society.

2. Land needed to protect site. In the opinion of the present investigator, the three tracts constituting the present historic site property do not provide an area adequate for the proper interpretation and protection of the Fort Clatsop site regardless of what agency administers it in the future. The considerations leading to this conclusion are as follows:

- a. The proper interpretation of the site would require access to, and the preservation of the natural scene at, two important features not included in the present historic site property: (1) the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River where the exploring party landed and kept its canoes, and (2) the spring from which the party obtained its water during the stay at Fort Clatsop and the existence of which helped determine the fort's location.
- b. The proper administration of the site would require the construction and use of certain developments which could not be placed on the present property without serious impairment of the historic scene. For instance, a considerable section of the existing road from the parking area is located on privately owned property south of the Clatsop County Historical Society Tract. This road could not be relocated onto the present historic site property without rather severe grading which would detract from the historic scene. Also, the present property is not large enough to permit the construction of such needed features as employee housing, visitor center, and a utility area without intruding on the historic scene.
- c. The proper protection of the site would require additional buffer areas to preserve the historic scene. At present the country surrounding the site is largely timber land and agricultural property, and it is not too difficult to visualize how the area must have looked in 1805. This type of land use is changing rapidly, however, and residential and commercial developments are becoming more prominent. One existing residence, only about 300 feet north of the existing historical property, demonstrates how damaging this type of land use can be to the integrity of the scene.

In the opinion of the present investigator, the minimum area required to assure the proper interpretation and protection of the historical monument, in view of the considerations described above and in view of the topography, is that shown within the green line on Map 2. The achievement of this boundary would require the acquisition of approximately 32 acres of land in addition to the 6.7 acres within the exterior boundaries of the existing historical site property. The exact acreage involved can, of course, be determined only after a survey on the ground.

The land thus recommended for acquisition is in four ownerships, as follows (see Map 2):

- 17 acres Ragnvald J. and Jean Kraft
- 4.2 acres Archie Riekkola
- 5.5 acres Crown Zellerbach Corporation

### 5.3 acres L. H. and Ruth C. Wood [\[81\]](#)

If all of the above-listed property were acquired, the area would still be somewhat cramped in view of the facilities which would be required for an entirely adequate historical monument. In particular, the heavy visitation which can be expected would develop a need for a rather extensive parking area, which would have to be so located and so screened as not to disturb the atmosphere of primeval forest which should be created around the actual fort site. Further, there would be the problem raised by the necessity of giving access over monument land to the one-acre tract and residence owned by Kenneth C. and Ruth M. Miller and located about 300 feet north of the existing historic site property. Due to the terrain, it is probable that access also would have to be given over monument land to the unpurchased portion of the Kraft property. In addition, the view southward from the fort site could be rendered unsightly by residential or commercial development of the lowlands lying along the county road immediately to the south of the above-proposed monument area.

These problems probably could be avoided by the acquisition of all land within the yellow line on Map 2. The achievement of this boundary would involve the acquisition of approximately 69 acres of land in addition to the existing historic site property. Such an enlarged boundary would involve only one more land ownership than the minimum boundary recommended above--the one-acre tract and residence owned by Kenneth C. and Ruth M. Miller.

Ideally, a monument dedicated to the preservation of the historic scene at Fort Clatsop would also include land on the east bank of the Lewis and Clark River opposite the fort site. If the area within the purple line on Map 2 were acquired, only 2 additional owner ships would be involved, 4.3 acres of tidelands owned by Clatsop County and about 20.0 acres owned by Edith and Robert W. Johnson.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section4a.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



### IV. PARK DATA (continued)

#### B. Appraised value

Before detailed consideration is given to appraised values, it should be stated in general that the determination of actual land values in the Port Clatsop area is difficult at the present time. After having been fairly stable for a long period, land values have begun to rise sharply during the last decade. This condition is due to the demands created by increasing population, to the changing character of land use in the vicinity, to the higher prices paid for timber, and to unsettled conditions as regards possible oil and gas deposits.

The unusual disparity between official assessed values and actual values is recognized by both the County and State. At the present time property values in Clatsop County are being re-appraised by the Oregon State Tax Commission, and until the work is completed the appraised values as given on assessment rolls will be of little use in estimating true values.

An example will illustrate the existing condition very clearly. Swamp land lying near, but not on the shore line of, the Lewis and Clark River in the Fort Clatsop vicinity is generally now assessed at \$3 per acre. In accordance with the recognized relation ship of assessed value to appraised value for such land, the appraised value is about \$18.00 per acre. According to the County Assessor, the actual sale value of this type of property is also about \$18 per acre. However, a tract of such land lying a short distance northeast of the Fort Clatsop Site was recently sold to a commercial firm which wanted it for a special purpose for about \$300 per acre.

#### 1. Present historic site property.

Being tax exempt, the tracts presently owned by the Oregon Historical Society and by Clatsop County have no official appraised values. The 1-acre tract owned by the Clatsop County Historical Society is still carried on the County Assessor's records as being part of the tract owned by Archie Riekkola (the deed of sale being still unrecorded). The Riekkola tract is appraised by the County at \$ 18. 00 per acre as logged-off land. The actual sale value of such land, according to the County Assessor, is generally assumed to be \$18 or more" per acre. In actuality, any valuation as low as \$18 per acre for this tract would be unrealistic, since in its present state it would be usable as a homesite, which land sells for \$500 or more per acre in this vicinity.

As a matter of hard, commercial fact, it must be recognized that the three present historic site tracts, considered purely as real estate and without historical considerations, comprise some of the most valuable property in the neighborhood. About four acres of the land, being of suitable gradient for residential use, having good exposure and access to views, and being accessible to a county road and utilities, would be desirable homesite property. The value of this property is

well recognized. As early as 1902, shortly after the Oregon Historical Society had acquired its original 3-acre tract, it was claimed by a prospective purchaser of the surrounding land that the Historical Society tract contained the only good building site and about all the cleared land in the immediate vicinity. Without the 3 acres, said a former owner, "the place is like a lock with no keyhole." [82]

In the unexpert opinion of the present investigator, a realistic actual sales value of the present historic site property, including the well, pump, and access road but excluding the reconstructed fort, would be about \$3500.

Of course, if the property were transferred to a State or Federal Government agency for operation as a historic monument, it is assumed that no sale price would be involved.

## 2. Land needed to protect site.

a. Minimum area. It is difficult to determine either the appraised value or the actual value of the additional 32 acres suggested as the minimum necessary to assure the proper protection and interpretation of the site. This situation results from the fact that several types of land-- agricultural, timber, logged-off, etc.-- are involved in most of the parcels concerned; and without an actual survey and appraisal it is impossible to tell how many acres of each type are within the suggested 32-acre addition. County assessment records are of little assistance, since the figures given therein are for entire parcels in single ownerships.

However, by combining the information received from the County Assessor and from personal observation on the ground, the following rough approximation was reached:

Property to be acquired from R. J. and J. Kraft. The land owned by the Krafts adjoining the present historical monument has a total area of 39.52 acres, consisting of 12.5 acres of agricultural land, 24.6 acres of logged-off land, and 2.4 acres of swamp land. The total appraised value of this land shown by the county records is \$2620.

Since the 17 acres of the Kraft property suggested for acquisition comprise about 1/2 of the total property and since these 17 acres probably contain somewhat more agricultural land than the part not suggested for acquisition, it probably would be fair to say that the appraised value of the 17 acres equals about 1/2 the total appraised value, or \$1310.

The actual sale value of this property would be much higher, since it contains at least 3 acres of cleared building sites, which land, according to the County Assessor, sells for \$500 or more an acre. Also, some of the logged-off land now contains second-growth timber and thus might sell for about \$100 to \$150 per acre.

The actual sale value of this property, in the opinion of the present writer, would be about \$3400. In addition, the purchase price probably would have to include some charge for severance damage to the remainder of the Kraft property, which would be cut off from the most convenient approach from the county road.

Property to be acquired from A. Riekkola. The 4.2 acres of Riekkola property suggested for acquisition presently are classified as logged-off land and are appraised at about \$ 18 per acre. The officially estimated actual sale value of such land is "\$18 or more" per acre. However, this property contains some timber, and in the new assessment the valuation of at least part of it

almost certainly will be raised. Such timber-bearing land now sells for from \$100 to \$150 per acre in this vicinity according to the County Assessor. Acquisition of the entire tract probably would cost between \$800 and \$900, in view of homesite and timber potentials.

Property to be acquired from Crown Zellerbach Corporation. Determining the appraised value of this land is particularly difficult, since the 5.5 acres suggested for acquisition form only a small fraction of a large Crown Zellerbach holding in the vicinity. Four acres of the suggested addition are classed as logged-off land, part of a large tax lot consisting of 337.28 acres of logged-off land with a total appraised value of \$6020. At an average value of \$17.85 per acre, the total appraised value of the 4 acres in question would be \$71.40. Ordinarily, according to the County Assessor, logged-off land would sell at or below this appraised value, but this land now has second-growth timber on it and probably would sell for about \$100 to \$150 per acre. The particular logged-over land recommended for acquisition (see Map 2) forms a strip south of the Reikkola and Clatsop County Historical Society tracts and perhaps was intended to serve as a route of access to the extensive Crown Zellerbach holdings to the westward. This fact might influence the price which would have to be paid for the property.

The remaining approximately 1.5 acres of Crown Zellerbach land suggested for acquisition consists of a 60-foot-wide strip of land along the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River. This strip was acquired by the company as a right of way in connection with its storage and transport of logs on the adjacent river. This property is appraised at \$18 per acre; the official sale value is the same, but such land can sell for \$150 per acre. Actual value might be higher, since the land apparently is important to the company in its quite extensive operations in the vicinity. On the other hand the Crown Zellerbach Corporation has been extremely cooperative in the Fort Clatsop restoration project, and it might part with the property at little or no cost to the acquiring agency. Because of the unusual circumstances, it seems impossible to estimate what it would cost to acquire the 5.5 acres. Perhaps \$1020 would be a reasonable guess.

Property to be acquired from L. H. and R. C. Wood. These 5.3 acres are part of a large tax lot of 107.11 acres of mixed agricultural, pasture, and logged-off land. The total appraised value of the entire lot is \$11,200, or an average of \$104.56 per acre. Since perhaps 4 acres of the 5.3-acre parcel in question would probably be classed as timber land now, a more realistic sale price probably would be about \$850 for the parcel.

Summary. The appraised value of the 32 acres suggested as the minimum amount of additional land required for the proper protection of the site is perhaps about \$2038. An unofficial estimate of the present-day actual sale value is \$6120.

b. Area needed for more adequate protection. The determination of the appraised value of the 69 acres of land (in addition to the present monument) within the more satisfactory boundary as suggested by the yellow line on Map 2 is likewise virtually impossible.

Approximately 2.5 acres of this land would be shore-line property, appraised at \$18 per acre and with an officially estimated actual sale value of \$18 per acre. About 4 acres would be Crown Zellerbach logged-off land with an average appraised value of \$17.85 per acre and a present-day actual timberland value of about \$150 per acre. About 28.4 acres would be from the Wood property, with an average appraised value of \$104.56 per acre and an actual sale value of perhaps \$200 per acre. The total Reikkola property of 4.2 acres is appraised at \$76; the officially estimated sale value is the same. About 28.9 acres would be from the Kraft property, with an average appraised value of \$66.29 per acre, or a total appraised value of

\$1916, and with a total actual sales value, including home-sites, of about \$5800. The remaining acre consists of the Miller property (1 acre and residence) the land of which is appraised at \$1000 and the improvements on which are appraised at \$11,970. The official sale price of the Miller land and improvements would be about \$12,970; a more realistic estimate is \$16,500.

Thus, the total appraised value of the land and improvements within the yellow line is about \$18,048; as best as can be determined, the actual sale value of the same property would be about \$29,805.

c. Area suggested to protect view across Lewis and Clark River. If, to reach ultimate ideal boundaries, lands on the east bank of the Lewis and Clark River should be acquired as shown by the purple line on Map 2, the appraised value of the lands involved would be as follows: 4.3 acres of county-owned shoreline property, with no appraised value but an actual sale value of \$150 per acre; and 20 acres of the Johnson property (mixed agricultural and pasture land) with an average appraised value of \$181.73 per acre and an average actual sale value of perhaps \$300 per acre. Therefore, if it should prove necessary to purchase the county-owned property, the total actual sale value of this east-bank tract would be about \$6645.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section4b.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004



# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



### IV. PARK DATA (continued)

#### C. Condition and previous development.

In general, the physical condition of the site may be described as excellent, with sufficient development to serve fairly adequately the needs of a small, local historical monument receiving not more than 12,000 visitors annually. The only marked deficiencies in development relate to interpretive facilities, which are almost completely lacking, and sanitary facilities, which are rudimentary.

The property is attractive in appearance. The fort site and its immediate surroundings are quite heavily wooded, thus presenting at least an illusion of the primitive scene as it was at the time of Lewis and Clark's visit. The present historic site property is not large enough to preserve this scene. Thus the continuance of the present appearance is dependent upon the continued lack of development of the surrounding privately owned land. The sections of the property devoted to public use have been cleared of undergrowth and are partially covered with sod.

Existing developments on the 5.9 acres of historic site property are as follows:

1. Access roads and parking area. A paved county road (Fort Clatsop loop Road), which in general parallels the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River, traverses the Oregon Historical Society tract from north to south. From this county road a single-lane, gravel-surfaced access road, with a bifurcated entrance, leads up the slope to the parking area adjacent to the fort site. Each fork of the entrance road is about 150 feet long. From their junction to the parking lot is another 250 feet. The gravel surface on this road is not heavy, but it is adequate to provide traction even after prolonged rains.

The parking lot consists of a level area, about 3/4 acre in extent, which has been cleared of trees and brush. Gravel has been spread over most of this area, but the coating is not every where heavy enough to provide firm support for automobiles after heavy rains.

From the south end of the parking lot a single-lane exit road carries traffic back down the slope to the county road, which it joins at the southern end of the Oregon Historical Society tract. Gravel has been applied to this road, but not heavily enough to prevent mud during rains.

2. Historical marker. A modest bronze tablet, set in concrete, commemorates Fort Clatsop. It evidently marks the spot pointed out by pioneer settlers to the Oregon Historical Society in 1901 as the fort site. Except for several directional signs and one sign identifying trenches left from archeological excavations, this plaque is the only interpretive marker on the historical property. Its text is as follows:

"This marks the site of  
OLD FORT CLATSOP  
Established by LEWIS and CLARK  
A.D. 1805-6  
Oregon Historical Society, Custodian."

3. "Replica" of Fort Clatsop. At present, the most noticeable development on the property is a log structure generally termed a "replica of Fort Clatsop," or the "Fort Clatsop restoration." The structure was completed in the summer of 1955.

The overall dimensions of the fort are 50 feet by 50 feet. It is composed of two parallel buildings, each 50 feet long and about 15 feet wide. These structures, composed of horizontally laid logs, are 20 feet apart and connected on each end by a wall of pickets about 8 feet high. The south wall is pierced by a double gate which forms the fort entrance. There is a flagpole in the open court between the buildings.

The west building contains three rooms; the east contains four. The buildings rest on concrete foundations, the tops of which are only slightly above ground level except where exposed by the slope of the ground surface. The floors of all the rooms are of dirt, and the roofs are of heavy cedar shakes. There are no fireplaces in any of the rooms.

Logs for the replica came from the Columbia Tree Farm of the Crown Zellerbach Corporation. The logs were specially selected for uniformity of size and freedom from defects. During removal from the forest and during later processing, each log was individually handled by cable sling rather than tongs to prevent damage. Loggers who assisted in the loading wore leather-soled shoes instead of calks. After being peeled, cut to the correct length, and notched, the logs were chemically treated in a vacuum pressure system. It is estimated that logs thus "Wolmanized" will resist insects and rotting for about 75 years. [83]

The replacement cost of the building has been variously estimated, some estimates running as high as nearly \$50,000. [84] Indeed the actual investment of funds was quite high. The Crown Zellerbach Corporation estimates that its contribution to the project--in the form of labor, logs, chemical processing, and transportation--amounted to at least \$20,000. The local Fort Clatsop Finance Committee, sponsored jointly by the Astoria Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Clatsop County Historical Society, paid out about \$3,000 in cash for hired labor and materials. In addition, members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations contributed a substantial amount of labor and materials to the project. [85]

The replica is surrounded by a 6-foot, man-proof, wire mesh fence, which is surmounted by barbed wire. This fence was completed in December 1955. The materials were provided by the Oregon Historical Society; the labor was provided by members of the Clatsop County Historical Society and the Astoria Junior Chamber of Commerce. [86]

Admittedly the replica is not an absolutely reproduction of the original Lewis and Clark fort. This stems, first, from certain compromises made necessary by accurate condition the desire to give the structure a degree of permanence and by the necessity of keeping costs within the range of available funds. Second, relatively little is known concerning the exact appearance of the original fort. The two floor plans of the post in Clark's records are not in complete agreement, and the information about the structures given in the journals allows considerable room for the exercise of the imagination. Therefore, even if unlimited funds were available,

any reconstruction would of necessity be at least partially conjectural. Points of difference between the present structure and the original, as known from records of the expedition, include the following:

- a. Certain present-day features such as concrete foundations, modern metal spikes, and milled gutters were not present in the original fort.
- b. The roofs of the replica are covered with shakes instead of the split boards, each about 10 feet by 2 feet by 1 1/2 inches, which covered the original cabin.
- c. The cabin walls in the replica are not daubed.
- d. The replica is without chimneys and fireplaces, sentry box, doors, puncheon floors, and bunks, all of which were features of the original fort.
- e. The restored fort has only one gate, while the original had two.

Of course, many of these discrepancies could be corrected by the expenditure of additional funds. But, no matter how carefully the work might be done, it will never be possible to make an exact replica of Fort Clatsop.

4. Well, pump, and drinking fountain. A well, 45 feet deep, and producing 6 gallons of water a minute, was completed in January 1955. The drilling cost was \$315. An electric pump, housed in a small wooden shed, was installed over the well, and pipes were laid to conduct the water to a drinking fountain, which was a gift of the local D. A. R. chapter.

5. Miscellaneous improvements. Two wooden comfort stations, each containing one pit-type toilet, are on the Oregon Historical Society property. If visitation increases, more adequate comfort station facilities will be a necessity.

A public telephone, located in a small outdoor-type booth, adjoins the pump house. There are four picnic tables on the grounds.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section4c.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



### IV. PARK DATA (continued)

#### D. Care.

1. Past. When acquired by the Oregon Historical Society in 1901, the level section of the site was used as pasture, and the remainder was covered with second-growth timber and brush. For a number of years thereafter, as far as available records show, the efforts of the Society were largely directed towards raising funds to mark the site, and relatively little, if anything, was done to care for the property or to provide facilities for the visiting public. In 1905 the Society received a request from C. A. Stone, of Astoria, for permission to create a public picnic ground on the site, with swings, refreshment and souvenir stands, and other developments, but seemingly nothing resulted from this proposal. [87]

A marker was finally placed on the site in 1912, and from that time the property seems to have received sporadic maintenance, largely by local civic groups. In a letter dated July 31, 1928, a member of the Society wrote that "quite recently" the tract had been cleared of brush, a fine flagpole installed in a cement base, and a bronze tablet erected. At that time Clatsop County was widening and improving the road to the site. It was noted that citizens of Astoria had contributed "considerable time and money" toward these improvements. [88]

Since funds were not available for the employment of a caretaker at the site, it was inevitable that there should be a certain amount of vandalism. The bronze marker plate was stolen at least three times between 1929 and 1942. Although recovered each time, it had to be removed entirely during World War II to save it from being taken and sold as scrap metal.

The Oregon Historical Society was unable to obtain maintenance assistance during World War II, and the site was neglected. Complaints were made that it was being used "as a garbage dump."

After the war the Clatsop County Historical Society assumed much of the burden of maintenance. In 1947, for instance, members of this organization cleared the debris from the grounds and arranged for the local police to make "frequent" checks to prevent vandalism and rowdyism. But such maintenance, dependent on volunteered labor, tended to be sporadic, and by 1952 the local press described the site as being in a "frightful condition," choked with brush and showing "plain evidences of years of neglect." [89]

The Clatsop County Historical Society and the Oregon Historical Society were concerned about the condition of the site but were unable to remedy it due to a lack of funds. Relief came in the fall of 1953, when the newly organized Astoria Junior Chamber of Commerce agreed to clean up and maintain the property. During an intensive three-week work project, the Junior Chamber and the Clatsop County Historical Society cleared the grounds, erected a new flagpole, restored the bronze marker which had been in storage since early in World War II,

repaired the access road, improved the parking area, and made plans to build picnic facilities. The newly installed marker was dedicated on November 11, 1953. [90]

During the next year the maintenance and further development of the Fort Clatsop site became linked with plans for the Lewis and Clark Sesquicentennial Celebration, which was scheduled for 1955. As early as February of 1954 it was decided by civic leaders and organizations in Astoria that the city's participation in the celebration would center about the Fort Clatsop site. The Clatsop County Historical Society and the Astoria Junior Chamber of Commerce, with the permission of the Oregon Historical Society, organized a joint project to erect a replica of Fort Clatsop on the site, and to further improve the grounds by the installation of a well, pump, and sanitary facilities. [91]

This project was completed with the dedication of the restored fort on August 21, 1955. The maintenance of the ground was accomplished during the year largely as a part of the construction project, but once the work was ended it became apparent that additional protection was required at the site. Since funds were lacking for a permanent caretaker, a wire fence was built around the restored structure to keep out vandals. The fencing materials were supplied by the Oregon Historical Society, while the installation was accomplished by the Clatsop County Historical Society and the Astoria Junior Chamber of Commerce. The fencing project was completed early in December 1955. [92]

It was realized, however, that mere physical protection would not solve the maintenance and interpretive problem at Fort Clatsop. As the Astorian-Budget of April 4, 1956, pointed out in an editorial, surrounding the fort by a wire fence was certainly "a poor way to show it to visitors." A summer caretaker, said the paper a few months later, was "imperative." [93]

2. Present. Maintenance during the 1956 season was on a quite different basis than during previous years. The initial clean up and preparation was accomplished as before, through voluntary local labor, this time provided by the Astoria Lions Club. Clatsop County assisted by providing police inspection and the occasional attention of its road maintenance crews to the access drive and parking area. But the principal improvement was the provision of a full-time care-taker at the site during the summer months as the result of an arrangement worked out by the Oregon Historical Society and the Clatsop County Historical Society at a meeting on May 23.

The Oregon Historical Society agreed to underwrite the costs of the project, advancing \$50 a month for the caretaker's salary and paying the insurance on the property. Visitors were to be asked to make small donations to help meet the expenses; and the caretaker was authorized to sell souvenirs supplied by the Clatsop County Historical Society.

On the whole, this program worked out very well during the 1956 tourist season. Some difficulty was experienced in finding a person for the caretaker position, but after a period of initial experiment, the job was filled satisfactorily. A retired government employee and his wife provided custodial and interpretive services during the period June 18 to September 17. The restored fort was kept open to the public from 10 a.m. to 6 p. m. daily. The money received from donations was turned over to the Oregon Historical Society and very nearly defrayed the costs of the Society's participation in the project.

3. Future. The ability of the Oregon Historical Society and the Clatsop County Historical Society to continue with the present caretaking arrangement is problematical. The success of

the arrangement depends upon the continued availability of satisfactory caretakers who will agree to work on a full-time basis for a remuneration of between \$50 and \$75 a month. The chances that such employees can continue to be found over a period of years are not great.

Also, the physical maintenance of the property depends upon the continued voluntary cooperation of such agencies and organizations as Clatsop County (for road and parking lot maintenance and garbage removal) and the Astoria Junior Chamber of Commerce and Lions Club (for major grounds maintenance, clean-up projects, provision of new facilities, etc.). There have been lengthy periods in the past during which enthusiasm for such voluntary assistance has flagged, and there is no assurance that it will not do so again.

Furthermore, as visitation continues to increase, maintenance even upon the present scale will be inadequate. Before long the site will require a full-time, year-round caretaker, additional interpretive services, and increased visitor facilities such as modern rest rooms, paved parking lot, and improved access roads.

It is not realistic to assume that the Oregon Historical Society and the Clatsop County Historical Society will have funds available to meet the increased caretaking expenses which will be occasioned by growing visitation and enlarged facilities. As will be discussed below (section IV, F), it is unlikely that entrance fees, if charged, could produce sufficient revenues to meet such expenses; and, even should the Oregon Historical Society receive increased State appropriations in the future, such funds will be required for the proposed expansion of its main headquarters and for its educational and preservation programs.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section4d.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004



# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



### IV. PARK DATA (continued)

#### E. Accessibility.

1. Roads. The site is readily accessible by private automobiles, since the paved Fort Clatsop Loop Road (County Road No. 201) passes through both parcels of land owned by the Oregon Historical Society and within 200 feet of the restored fort. A graveled entrance road gives access from the county road directly to the fort site.

Seven tenths of a mile north of the site, the Fort Clatsop Loop Road intersects U. S. Highways 101 and 26. U. S. 101 is the main coast highway which runs from southern California to northern Washington. By this highway, Fort Clatsop is 7.4 miles from Astoria, which lies to the northeast; and 15.4 miles from Seaside, which lies to the southwest. By way of Seaside and U. S. Highway 26, Fort Clatsop is 95.2 miles from Portland. From Astoria, Portland is 106 miles via U. S. Highway 30, which runs along the south bank of the Columbia River.

2. Public transportation. There is no public transportation directly to the site. However, nearby Astoria is easily reached by Greyhound Bus and West Coast Airlines from Portland and other Pacific Northwest population centers. Taxi service and automobile rental service are available in Astoria.

3. Nearby population centers. Fort Clatsop is not situated in the immediate vicinity of any large center of population, but it is in an area which, though now relatively lightly populated, is growing rapidly. Clatsop County, in which it is located, has a population of 30,776, an increase of 24.6% since 1940. The nearest city, Astoria, had a population of 12,331 in 1950. It was estimated in 1956 that this figure had increased to 14,000. Approximately 40,000 people live within a radius of 40 miles from Fort Clatsop. However, the site is within easy driving distance of most of the Pacific North- west's largest cities. For instance, Portland is less than 100 miles to the southeast; Seattle is 184 miles to the northwest.

Population statistics concerning the surrounding country are unsatisfactory as indicators of the potential visitation to the site. Clatsop County and the nearby area at the mouth of the Columbia River form a recreation center which is rapidly increasing in popularity. Each summer the population swells with temporary residents as people flock from the interior to the seashore. Also, Fort Clatsop is, for all practical purposes, located on U. S. Highway 101, which in summer is a heavily traveled tourist route. The availability of hotels and motels in nearby Astoria and Seaside is a factor in encouraging travelers to linger in the area.

4. Utilities. Water is already available at the site through a well which produces 6 gallons a minute. The water table is relatively near the surface (45 feet), and it is believed that larger wells could easily be developed if needed. The water is safe for drinking purposes.

Electric power is already on the property, supplied from the lines of the Pacific Power and Light Company. Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company telephone service is already available on the site. Fuel oil and bottled propane gas are easily obtained in the vicinity.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section4e.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



### IV. PARK DATA (continued)

#### **F. Possibility of preservation**

Since there are no physical remains of the original Fort Clatsop, at least above ground, the problem of preserving an existing historic structure is not involved at this site. The problem, rather, is that of preserving the ground on which the original structure stood and the historic scene surrounding it.

Even under the present ownership, it is probable that the actual ground on which Fort Clatsop stood can be preserved indefinitely for historic monument use. The Oregon Historical Society has managed to do so for more than 50 years and, if no program of extensive public use is involved, it probably can continue to hold the property through out the foreseeable future. So dense is the natural forest growth in the vicinity, that the present acreage, if properly landscaped, will suffice to preserve at least an illusion of the historic setting despite the probability that the surrounding property will see increasing residential and commercial development.

However, if the site is to be operated as a historic monument open to public use, even on its present scale, it is doubtful if the present owning and operating agencies can continue to assure such preservation. This doubt becomes almost a certainty as regards the proper preservation of the site--with adequate provision for public access, with acquisition of additional property needed to fully protect the historic scene and to include subsidiary sites connected with the original fort, and with proper interpretive and administrative facilities.

Probable cost of operation. If the present facilities and improvements are retained, and if the aim of the site operation is only to provide the minimum of interpretation and visitor accommodations, the mere preservation of the site will require the following annual expenditures by the local administrative agency:

Salary of year-round caretaker (to live off the site)	\$4,000
Salary of relief caretaker	1,200
Maintenance of roads and parking lot	300
Garbage removal, utilities, etc.	240
Supplies and repairs of equipment	120
Insurance	100
Painting, carpentry, and miscellaneous repairs	200
	\$6,160

Probable cost of repairs. If a more adequate historical monument, with somewhat more than

the bare minimum of interpretive and visitor facilities, is to be operated at the site, certain capital expenditures should be made at the outset by the local operating agency. Rough estimates of these expenditures are as follows:

Completion and alteration of the restored fort to make it conform as nearly as possible to what is known of the original	\$5,000
Simple interpretive exhibits in restored fort	2,000
Comfort station and septic tank	2,500
Minimum repair of access roads and parking lot	1,000
Interpretive and directional signs	300
	\$10,800

Possibility of income from fees and other charges. There is a good possibility that visitor fees could produce a substantial revenue, although this income probably never would be sufficient to cover operating and maintenance expenses of an adequately protected and interpreted historical monument.

During the summer of 1956 about 11,000 visitors were tallied by a manually operated counting machine at the restored fort, and more than 9600 of these visitors signed the register book. Although no admission fee was charged, visitors were asked to make donations . During the period June 18 to September 17, these donations totaled \$620.67. An admission fee of \$.25 per visitor would have deterred some visits, but it probably would have produced about \$2000 in revenue.

A further opportunity for revenue exists in the sale of interpretive literature and souvenirs. In 1956 the gross income from the sale of souvenirs--largely items produced for sale during the Lewis and Clark Sesquicentennial Celebration--was about \$1000. The profits from these sales went to the Clatsop County Historical Society.

Undoubtedly visitation will increase in future years, particularly if interpretive and other facilities are improved. However, as visitation increases, so will the costs of fee collection and so will operating and maintenance expenses.

Possible local administrative agencies. Under present conditions, there is little possibility that either the Clatsop County Historical Society or the Oregon Historical Society, or both together, can obtain the amounts specified above to provide for the minimum improvement and operation of the site. The revenues of the Clatsop County Historical Society barely suffice to operate its museum in Astoria, and any additional funds it can obtain in the future will be required for that phase of its work. The Oregon Historical Society, established in 1898, is a sound institution, supported by both State and private funds. During the 1955-1957 biennium, the State appropriation amounted to \$45,000, a sum which will be approximately one half of the total operating budget. For the 1957-1959 biennium, a budget of \$165 320 has been proposed, of which \$65,000 will be private funds and \$99,800 will be requested from State funds. These rather substantial budgets, however, are required for the operation of the Society's museum, library, headquarters, and for its educational program. These budgets do not permit the operation of a historic monument at Fort Clatsop on the scale indicated above.

There are two means by which the present operating agencies might obtain the funds required, over and above any entrance fees, for the proper maintenance of a Fort Clatsop Historical

Monument. One method, which has been proposed several times in the Astoria newspapers, is the levying of a special local property tax. The other method is to obtain a special increase in the State's appropriation to the Oregon Historical Society. The possibilities for obtaining passage of either of these measures are not great, but they should be explored.

Another solution of the problem which has been suggested periodically in the local press is the creation of a State park at Fort Clatsop. Oregon does have a State park system, administered by the State Parks Department, which is a division of the Oregon State Highway Commission. The system includes (1955) 161 areas, with a total acreage of 56,024. Funds available for expenditure in 1955 amounted to \$1,265,414. Several of the state parks, such as Champoege State Park and Willamette Stone State Park, have historical values. At first glance, therefore, this proposal would appear to have much merit as a means of preserving the Fort Clatsop site. And, as a matter of fact, the proposal may lead to an eventual solution of the problem. However, to date the State Parks Department has had little experience in administering historical areas as historical monuments, and there is the possibility that the Fort Clatsop area might not fit comfortably into the present park system.

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

---

focl/hussey2/section4f.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



### IV. PARK DATA (continued)

---

#### **G. Relationship to areas already in National Park System**

Geographically, Fort Clatsop is not conveniently associated with any area presently administered by the National Park Service. The nearest such area is Fort Vancouver National Monument, Washington, about 110 miles southeast of Astoria by rather circuitous high way routes. Mount Rainier National Park is about 170 miles northeast of Fort Clatsop by highway, and Olympic National Park (headquarters) is about 255 miles north.

Historically, however, Fort Clatsop has rather close links with at least two areas of the National Park System: Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, in St. Louis, Missouri; and Meriwether Lewis National Monument, near Hoherwald, Tennessee. The Jefferson National Expansion Memorial commemorate the westward growth of the United States, in which the Lewis and Clark Expedition was such an important and dramatic episode. The memorial is located on ground on which, or near which, Lewis and Clark were welcomed back to civilization, and there the explorers spent later years of public service. In the exhibits presently planned for the museum there, Lewis and Clark will be treated rather extensively in one major exhibit unit related to the Louisiana Purchase. The Meriwether Lewis National Monument commemorates the location on the Natchez Trace where Lewis died and is buried.

Other areas in the National Park System are less directly connected with the Lewis and Clark Expedition but share with Fort Clatsop an association with the same general historical theme--the American settlement and occupation of the Pacific Northwest. Among the areas having some degree of association with this theme are Scotts Bluff National Monument, Fort Laramie National Monument, Whitman National Monument, and Fort Vancouver National Monument.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section4g.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004



# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



### IV. PARK DATA (continued)

---

#### H. Sponsors of the project

The project to obtain Federal assistance in the development and administration of the Fort Clatsop Site is not a new one. It goes back to at least 1905 and 1906 when the Oregon Development League, of Astoria, and the Oregon Historical Society sponsored legislation for a Congressional appropriation to purchase 160 additional acres at the site and to erect a suitable monument in commemoration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. This effort was at least partly inspired by the earlier success of Sioux City, Iowa, in obtaining Federal funds to assist in the construction of a shaft in memory of Sergeant Charles Floyd, the only member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to lose his life during the journey. A bill requesting an appropriation of up to \$10,000 to erect a "fitting monument" at the Fort Clatsop site was actually introduced in Congress toward the end of 1906, but it did not pass. [94]

The next serious attempt to obtain the assistance of the Federal Government in the preservation of the Fort Clatsop site came in 1936, when the Astoria Chamber of Commerce through its secretary, Mr. W. H. Nelson, proposed that several sites in and around Astoria be designated by the Secretary of the Interior as of national historical significance. The Fort Clatsop property was one of these sites. After a field investigation by the National Park Service, the proposal to give national recognition to the site of Fort Clatsop was considered separately by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments at its meeting on March 25-26, 1937. As the result of careful study and deliberation, the Board recognized the site "as having historical significance" but recommended it "for development as a state area, inasmuch as it seemed to have more local than national value." [95]

The matter apparently rested there until after World War II, when the Clatsop County Historical Society and other local civic groups began to clean up the site and rehabilitate it as a historic monument after years of neglect. Realizing that the local organizations and the Oregon Historical Society could not properly finance the maintenance of the property, the Clatsop County Historical Society in June, 1948, passed a resolution calling upon Congress to make the Fort Clatsop Site a national monument. This move was "encouraged," said the local press, by the signing into law of the Act of June 19, 1948, authorizing the establishment of Fort Vancouver National Monument, Washington. [96]

This resolution apparently had no immediate effect beyond stimulating further attempts to identify the exact site of Fort Clatsop, but from that time the idea of establishing a national monument at the property seems never to have been entirely lost sight of by the local historical society and its cooperating organizations. Periodically thereafter they became concerned about the "frightful condition" of the site, and among proposals for special local taxes or a State park, the national monument idea continued to be mentioned as a possible solution. Although a certain amount of this concern was due to fears that the run-down

condition of the site and the resulting "bad publicity" would reduce the tourist trade, it is apparent from local press comment that there existed a genuine desire to rescue from neglect "one of the most important historical sites in the northwest." [97]

The national monument movement really began to gather momentum in 1953 after the newly organized Astoria Junior Chamber of Commerce became interested in the upkeep of the site. In October of that year representatives of the Junior Chamber, the Clatsop County Historical Society, the Oregon Historical Society, and other interested groups met in Astoria and formulated a definite, four-point program to achieve national monument status for Fort Clatsop. [98] One result of this renewed interest was the writing of letters, dated October 27, 1953, by Dr. Frank B. Queen of the University of Oregon Medical School to Secretary of the Interior McKay and to Congressman Walter Norblad formally urging that Fort Clatsop be designated a national monument or national historic site. Dr. Queen represented the property as being "virtually uncared for" and "barren of any items of [visible] interest." He believed that national recognition would assist in remedying these conditions and would also result in the site being placed on tourist maps. [99] Mr. Lancaster Pollard, Superintendent of the Oregon Historical Society, was also active in enlisting support for the project.

During the next year, local attention was largely directed at plans for developing the site and reconstructing Fort Clatsop in connection with the Lewis and Clark Sesquicentennial observance, but the national monument proposal was not dropped. For instance, at a meeting held in Astoria early in October, 1954, to work out details of the restoration, the subject of the proposed national monument was raised. Dr. Burt Brown Barker, President of the Oregon Historical Society, told the audience not to be "too ready to turn over your historical sites" to the Federal Government. "Keep control of what is rightfully yours," he urged, "and Fort Clatsop of Lewis and Clark fame belongs to you." [100]

Despite this advice, however, the feeling of the Oregon Historical Society members in general was that the site should not continue to be administered at the state or local level and that administration by the Federal Government would provide the financial resources needed to maintain and develop the area as they believed it deserved. Local civic groups at Astoria endorsed this view, and the Lewis and Clark Sesquicentennial appeared to offer an opportunity to enlist broader support for it. Through various interested individuals, the proposal was brought to the attention of Senator Wayne Morse, Senator Richard L. Neuberger, and other Congressional representatives.

Having a strong personal interest in the Lewis and Clark Expedition and in historical matters, Senator Neuberger was particularly receptive to the national monument idea. In cooperation with Senator Morse, and Senator Dworshak of Idaho, he introduced on July 12, 1955, Senate Bill 2498, "to provide that the Secretary of the Interior shall investigate and report to the Congress as to the advisability of establishing Fort Clatsop, Oregon, as a national monument." During November, the Board of Directors of the Oregon Historical Society passed a resolution favoring this proposal. The bill was passed by both houses of Congress and was approved by the President on June 18, 1956.

Subsequent to the passage of this act (Public Law 590), the proposal to give national monument or national historic site status to the site has received endorsement by several interested organizations and individuals. For instance, a communication favoring such action was sent to the Secretary of the Interior on August 6, 1956, by the Chairman of the National Parks Committee, The Garden Clubs of America. Expressions favoring the proposal have also

been issued by the Port land Garden Club and by Senator Harry F. Byrd, of Virginia.

Editorial comment in the Oregon press has been generally in favor of national monument status, but there has also been an expression of regret that the lack of local financial resources makes it impracticable "to keep control of this valuable asset in local hands." [101] The Portland Oregonian of June 21, 1956, stated the prevailing attitude quite clearly. "There can be little doubt" that Fort Clatsop would qualify for national recognition, said one editorial; "it is the most meaningful monument of an expedition unsurpassed in the nation's history." "There is a source of shame, however, in the fact that Oregon itself has never fully met its responsibility with regard to Fort Clatsop," it continued and warned that the Secretary of the Interior might well raise the question, why should the Federal Government recognize a feature which Oregon has not even "elevated to the status of a state park?"

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section4h.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



### IV. PARK DATA (continued)

---

#### I. Persons consulted during the field study

The investigation upon which this report is based was conducted at the Oregon Historical Society, Portland, during the periods December 3-8, 13-14, 1956; at the Fort Clatsop Site, the Clatsop County Historical Society, and the Clatsop County Courthouse, Astoria, during the period December 8-11, 1956; and at the Bureau of Land Management, Portland, Oregon on December 12, 1956. Additional library research was performed at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Persons consulted during the study include the following:

Mr. Thomas Vaughan, Director, Oregon Historical Society  
Mr. Kenneth Duckett, Librarian, Oregon Historical Society  
Mr. Otto A. Owen, President, Clatsop County Historical Society  
Mr. Burnby Bell, Corres. Secretary, Clatsop County Historical Society  
Mr. Walter G. Johnson, member, Clatsop County Historical Society  
Mr. Arthur F. Danielson, Surveyor, Clatsop County, Oregon  
Mr. Emil Berg, Assessor, Clatsop County, Oregon  
The Hon. Guy Boyington, County Judge, Clatsop County, Oregon  
Mrs. Constance Bernier, Assistant in County Clerk's Office, Clatsop County, Oregon  
Mrs. Dorothy C. Peterson, Land Law Clerk, Land Office, Bureau of Land Management, Portland, Oregon  
Mr. Otis O. Gould, Office of Cadastral Engineer, land Office, Bureau of Land Management, Portland, Oregon.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

focl/hussey2/section4i.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004

# Fort Clatsop

## Suggested Historic Area Report



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Patrick Gass, Gass's Journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Chicago, 1904), 184; Milo M. Quaife (ed.), The Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway (Publications of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Collections, XXII, Madison, 1916), 316; Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition 1804-1806 (7 vols. and atlas, New York, 1904-1905), III, 269-270, 316, 342; IV, 19.

<sup>2</sup>Thwaites, op. cit., IV, 41.

<sup>3</sup>T. C. Elliott, "Journal of David Thompson," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XV (June 1914), 105. The name "Lewis River," did not "take." The stream was shown as "Young's River" on some maps of the 1830's; the name "Lewis and Clark River" evidently first appeared in print in 1844.

<sup>4</sup>Gabriel Franchere, Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast. (R. G. Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, VI, Cleveland, 1904), 259.

<sup>5</sup>Ross Cox, Adventures on the Columbia River (2 vols., London, 1831), I, 116.

<sup>6</sup>Kenneth A. Spaulding (ed.), On the Oregon Trail: Robert Stuart's Journey of Discovery (Norman, Okla., 1953), 27-28.

<sup>7</sup>Elliott Coues (ed.), New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest; the Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson... (3 vols., New York, 1897), II, 771-772.

<sup>8</sup>Ore. Hist. Quart., VII(March 1907), 60.

<sup>9</sup>John K. Townsend, Narrative of a Journey across the Rocky Mountains (R. G. Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, XXI, Cleveland, 1905), 362-363.

<sup>10</sup>D. Lee and J. H. Frost, Ten Years in Oregon (New York, 1844), 15.

<sup>11</sup>J. Q. A. Bowlby to F. G. Young, Astoria, April 21, 1904, MS, in Oregon Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup>Vernon Carstensen (ed.), "Pacific Northwest Letters of George Gibbs," in Ore. Hist. Quart., LIV(September 1953), 230.

<sup>13</sup>George Gibbs, "Tribes of Western Washington and Northwestern Oregon," in U. S. Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region, Contributions to North American Ethnology (2 vols. in 3, Washington, 1877-1890), I, 238.

<sup>14</sup>Charles Melville Scammon, Collection, MSS, in Bancroft Library, University of California, P-K 206, vol. 5, n.p. Unfortunately, this pencil drawing is of little assistance in identifying the site. It shows only a single, small, gable-roofed structure backed by a dense stand of tall evergreens. The place could be almost any forested tract in the Pacific Northwest, which fact in itself is rather confusing, since as late as 1856, at least, a fairly extensive area near the fort site is known to have been cleared of trees and under cultivation as a garden. The trees in the Scammon sketch appear much taller than the 20-foot ones mentioned by Mrs. Victor in 1872. See note 15 below.

<sup>15</sup>Francis Fuller Victor, All Over Oregon and Washington (San Francisco, 1872), 43.

<sup>16</sup>Oregonian (Portland, Ore.), June 27, 1885, p. 3, col. 3.

<sup>17</sup>Elliott Coues (ed.), History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark (4 vols., New York, 1893), III, 904-905, note 3.

<sup>18</sup>Handwritten inscriptions on the reverse sides of three photographs taken on the occasion of W Wheeler's visit and now in the Oregon Historical Society bear the dated August 20, 1899." That these photographs were taken for Wheeler is sufficiently proved by the fact that two of them form the illustrations for his first published account of his visit to the site. Olin D. Wheeler, "On the Trail of Lewis and Clark," in Wonderland, 1900 (St. Paul, Minn., Northern Pacific Railway, 1900), 59.

<sup>19</sup>Wheeler, "On the Trail of Lewis and Clark," 59.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 58; Olin D. Wheeler The Trail of Lewis and Clark, 1804-1804 (2 vols., New York, 1904), II, 196.

<sup>21</sup>For further information on Coboway, Celiast, and Solomon H. Smith see sources cited in Thwaites, *op. cit.*, IV, 138, note 1. See also Ethel Abbey Moore, "Solomon Smith Built Missions," in Oregon Journal (Portland), July 24, 1955.

<sup>22</sup>Thwaites, *op. cit.*, IV, 139.

<sup>23</sup>Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast (2 vols., San Francisco, 1884), II, 60.

<sup>24</sup>Wheeler, "On the Trail of Lewis and Clark," 59-62; Wheeler, The Trail of Lewis and Clark, II, 194-197; Deposition of Silas B. Smith, Proceedings of the Oregon Historical Society . . . 1900 (Salem, 1900), 20.

<sup>25</sup>Other members of the party included William Chance of Astoria (he also had been with Wheeler), Mrs. Galloway, a Miss Wiley, and Master Preston Gillette. "In the Footsteps of

Lewis and Clark," in Sunday Oregonian (Portland), June 17, 1900, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup>Proceedings of the Oregon Historical Society...1900, 20-21.

<sup>27</sup>Reuben Cold Thwaites, "Newly Discovered Personal Records of Lewis and Clark," in Scribner's Magazine, XXXV (June 1904), 685-700.

<sup>28</sup>Proceedings of the Oregon Historical Society...1900, 18-19.

<sup>29</sup>Extract from Notes Surveyors, under Contract Clatsop County Historical of Joseph W. and John Trutch, Deputy dated January 19, 1856, typescript, in Society.

<sup>30</sup>The only part of Gillette's testimony which seems to be open to dispute is his statement that three fruit trees he sold to Franklin Shane were still standing in 1900. In 1949, Mrs. Milton York, who had lived on the fort site as a young girl, said that the two surviving cherry trees then on the property, and which show in the 1899 photographs were planted by her father, Joseph B. Stevenson, between about 1876 and 1881. Clatsop County Vacation News (Supplement to Seaside Signal, Seaside, Ore.), July 7, 1949.

<sup>31</sup>Victor, op. cit., 43; unidentified clipping, evidently dated January 15, 1900, in Oregon Historical Society, Scrapbook 21, p. 42; and survey notes cited in note 29 above. From internal evidence, it would appear that P. W. Gillette was the author of the article, or "letter to the editor," contained in the unidentified clipping in O. H. S., Scrapbook 21.

<sup>32</sup>Proceedings of the Oregon Historical Society...1900, 18-19.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 18-19, 20-21.

<sup>34</sup>Sunday Oregonian, June 17, 1900, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup>Sunday Oregonian, June 17, 1900, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>P. W. Gillette, "The Site of Fort Clatsop," in The Pacific Monthly, XII(August 1904), 92-93. The process of driving in the stakes is shown by a photograph which illustrates this article.

<sup>38</sup>Sunday Oregonian, June 17, 1900, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup>Astorian-Budget (Astoria, Ore.), February 12, 1948.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., June 26, 1948.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.; and unidentified clippings in scrapbook of Mr. Walter Johnson, Astoria.

<sup>42</sup>Louis R. Caywood, "The Exploratory Excavation of Fort Clatsop," in Oregon Historical



Quarterly, XLIX (September, 1948), 208.

<sup>43</sup>See also map in Ibid., 206.

<sup>44</sup>Caywood, op. cit., 209-210. The materials excavated by Mr. Caywood are preserved in the museum of the Clatsop County Historical Society, Astoria.

<sup>45</sup>Paul J. F. Schumacher, Archeological Field Notes, Fort Clatsop, Astoria, Oregon (typewritten report, Region Four, National Park Service, January 22, 1957).

<sup>46</sup>Bernard DeVoto (ed.), The Journals of Lewis and Clark (Boston, 1953), 279.

<sup>47</sup>Patrick Gass, A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery (Pittsburgh, 1808), 238.

<sup>48</sup>Thwaites, op. cit., III, 247-249.

<sup>49</sup>Thwaites, op. cit., III, 270.

<sup>50</sup>Patrick Gass, Gass's Journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Chicago, 1904), 184; Quaife, op. cit., 316.

<sup>51</sup>Ordway's journal says there were three lines of huts forming three sides of a square, the other side being walled with pickets. Quaife, op. cit., 317. However, this description does not agree with Clark's diagrams, which would appear to have precedence.

<sup>52</sup>DeVoto, op. cit., 336.

<sup>53</sup>This account of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and its stay at Fort Clatsop is based largely upon the original journals already cited in note 1 above. The estimate of the significance of the expedition is based upon the introductions to these works and upon other studies listed in the bibliography at the end of the historical narrative section of this report (see pp. 37-40 below).

<sup>54</sup>Oregon Historical Society, Scrapbook 21, p. 42; Deposition of C. W. Shane, June 15, 1900, in Proceedings of the Oregon Historical Society...1900, 20-21. In 1856 surveyors' notes show that there was a "Shane's House" 5.2 feet west of a point 148.5 feet north of the 1/4 corner between Sections 35 and 36, T.8N., R.10W., W.M. Notes of Joseph W. and John Trutch, typescript, in Clatsop County Historical Society. However, it is not clear if this was the house erected by Shane in 1851 or a later one built by his brother, Franklin. From Shane's deposition one gains the impression that the 1851 house was farther west from the edge of the bluff.

<sup>55</sup>Oath of P. W. Gillette, November 21, 1855; Oath of Charles W. Shane, February 21, 1857, MSS, in Records of Donation Certificate No. 5001, in Land Office, Bureau of Land Management, Portland.

<sup>56</sup>O. H. S., Scrapbook 21, p. 42

<sup>57</sup>Records of Do nation Certificate No. 5001, MSS.

<sup>58</sup>O. H. S., Scrapbook 21, p. 42

<sup>59</sup>Records of Donation Certificate No. 5001, MSS.

<sup>60</sup>O.H.S. Scrapbook 21, p. 42; Proceedings of the Oregon Historical Society . . . 1900, 18-19; Notes of John W. and Joseph Trutch, typescript.

<sup>61</sup>Shane had sold the north 1/2 of his claim in 1860, but perhaps it was returned to the estate, because his heirs later sold an undivided half of the full 320 acres and an undivided half of the mineral rights on the full 320 acres. Clatsop County Record of Deeds, vol. 11, p. 672; vol. 12, p. 65.

<sup>62</sup>Clatsop County Record of Deeds, vol. "C," p. 596; W. H. Smith to O. Wade, Astoria, October 20, 1877, MS, in Records of Donation Certificate No. 5001, MSS.

<sup>63</sup>Victor, op. cit., 43.

<sup>64</sup>Sunday Oregonian June 17, 1900, p. 8; clipping from Astorian Budget, about July 13 or 14, 1948, in Walter Johnson's Scrapbook.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.; Clatsop County Vacation News, July 7, 1949, pp. [10-11].

<sup>66</sup>O. H. S., Scrapbook 21, p. 42.

<sup>67</sup>Randall V. Mills, Stern-Wheelers up the Columbia (Palo Alto, California, 1947), 157-159.

<sup>68</sup>Clatsop County Record of Deeds, vol. "E," p. 270.

<sup>69</sup>J. Q. A. Bowlby to F. G. Young, Astoria, October 21, 1905, MS, in O. H. S.; Oregonian, June 27, 1885, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup>Clatsop County Record of Deeds, vol. 12, p. 65.

<sup>71</sup>J. R. Smith to R. Livingston, Astoria, January 18, 1902, Typewritten copy, in O. H. S.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid. There is some indication that the clay deposits in the vicinity may never have been worked on a full-blown commercial scale. See Samuel Geijsbeek, "Clay Deposits of Oregon," in Transactions of the American Ceramic Society, IV (1912), 650.

<sup>73</sup>Proceedings of the Oregon Historical Society...1899, 26-27.

<sup>74</sup>Unsigned typescript of a speech, dated August 28, 1915, in Oregon Historical Society.

<sup>75</sup>Proceedings of the Oregon Historical Society . . . 1900, 16.

<sup>76</sup>Original Warranty Deed, The American Mortgage Company of Scotland, Limited, to Oregon Historical Society, September 24, 1901, MS, in Oregon Historical Society; John H. Smith to P. Livingston, Astoria, January 18, 1902, typescript copy, in O.H.S.; unidentified newspaper clipping, dated May 24, 1901, in O.H.S, Scrapbook 11, p. 20.

<sup>77</sup>A. F. Danielson, Map of the Property of the Oregon Historical Society, Showing Proposed Addition, March, 1926, photostat in O.H.S. The spring to the north of the Oregon Historical Society property is in the trees shown at the extreme left of Photograph B3.

<sup>78</sup>T. C. Elliot to Mrs. Sigmund Frank, Portland, July 31, 1928, typewritten copy, in O. H. S.

<sup>79</sup>Original Warranty Deed, Gladding, McBean & Co. to Oregon Historical Society, May 25, 1928, MS, in O.H.S ; recorded in Clatsop County Record of Deeds, vol. 14, p. 124.

<sup>80</sup>Original Pargain and Sale Deed, Archie Riekkola et ux to Clatsop County Historical Society, February 7, 1955, MS, in Clatsop County Hist. Soc. (not recorded); Original Lease, Clatsop County to Clatsop Historical Society, February 15, 1955, MS, in possession of Mr. Otto A. Owen, Astoria.

<sup>81</sup>Acreages are rough estimates only.

<sup>82</sup>J. H. Smith to R. Livingston, Astoria, January 18, 1902, typescript copy in Oregon Historical Society.

<sup>83</sup>Stewart Holbrook, "Restoration of Fort Clatsop," in American Forests, August 1955 issue, pp. 30-31, 53.

<sup>84</sup>Richard L. Neuberger, "Monument on the Pacific," in New York Times, November 25, 1956, p. X33.

<sup>85</sup>Interview with Mr. Burnby Bell, Astoria, December 10, 1956; Clatsop County Historical Society, Minutes of Meeting, July 27, 1955.

<sup>86</sup>Interview with Mr. Thomas Vaughan, December 7, 1956; Astorian-Budget, November 7, 29, 1955.

<sup>87</sup>C. A. Stone to George H. Himes, Astoria, February 22, 1905, MS, in O. H. S.

<sup>88</sup>T. C. Elliot to Mrs. Sigmund Frank, Portland, July 31, 1928, MS, in O. H. S.

<sup>89</sup>Astorian-Budget (Astoria), August 5, 1952.

<sup>10</sup>Astorian-Budget, August 5, 1952; October 9, 16, November 12, 1953; Oregon Historical Quarterly, LIV(December, 1953), 334; The Oregonian (Portland), November 8, 1953.

<sup>11</sup>Newspaper clippings, many unidentified and undated, in the scrapbook of Mr. Walter G. Johnson, Astoria; Astorian-Budget, November 19, 1954.

<sup>12</sup>Astorian-Budget, November 7, 9, 29, December 6, 8, 1955; interview with Mr. Thomas Vaughan, December 7, 1956; The Oregonian, August 22, 1955.

<sup>93</sup>Astorian-Budget, December 8, 1955.

<sup>94</sup>J Q. A. Bowlby to F. G. Young, Astoria, Oct. 21, 1905; Bowlby to G. H. Himes, Astoria, Dec. 27, 1905; Bowlby to Young, Astoria, Dec. 8, 1906, MSS, in Oregon Historical Society.

<sup>95</sup>Arno B. Cammerer to W. H. Nelson, Washington, D. C., June 5, 1937, typescript copy, in Region Four Office, NPS.

<sup>16</sup>Unidentified clippings, dated June 20 and 25, 1948, in Scrapbook of Walter Johnson, Astoria.

<sup>17</sup>Astorian-Budget, August 5, 1952.

<sup>18</sup>Lancaster Pollard to C. E. Lauderdale, et al, Portland, Oct. 20, 1953, typescript copy, in Oregon Historical Society.

<sup>99</sup>Typescript copies in O. H. S.

<sup>100</sup>Undated, unidentified newspaper clipping in Scrapbook of Walter Johnson; Astorian-Budget, October 8, 1954

<sup>101</sup>Astorian-Budget, April 4, 1956.

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

---

focl/hussey2/notes.htm  
Last Updated: 04-May-2004